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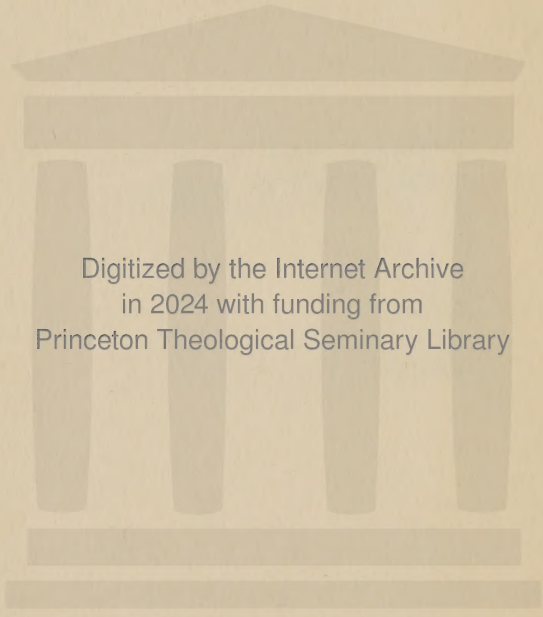
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CHARACTERISTICS

OF THE

GOSPEL MIRACLES.

SERMONS PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

WITH NOTES.

BY

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TO

FRIENDS AND FORMER PUPILS

AT CAMBRIDGE,

IN

MEMORY OF HOURS

SPENT TOGETHER IN THE STUDY OF

HOLY SCRIPTURE.

PREFACE.

THE subject which I have approached in these Sermons was directly suggested by the services of the three Sundays after Epiphany on which they were preached: and the festival of the Conversion of St Paul[1], which fell within the same period, seemed to furnish in some sense a practical illustration of the lessons which it conveys. Without hiding from myself in any degree the necessary incompleteness of the treatment of the question, I have felt less reluctance in deferring to the wish of some whose opinion I felt bound to follow, in the publication of the Sermons, because they suggest for further inquiry one of the many harmonies of Holy Scripture which

[1] This Sermon, owing to unforeseen circumstances, was not delivered.

seems to have been commonly disregarded. Though much has been written, both in old and modern times, with great beauty and wisdom on the Miracles of the Gospels, I do not remember to have seen any attempt to combine them into one whole as an Epiphany of Christ. Yet it is in this aspect, unless I am mistaken, that very much of their permanent meaning is best brought out; and the same view which shows the importance of the minute details in each work, places also in the clearest light the symmetry and unity of the entire group. It is, however, of the utmost importance not to confound an *essential* unity with a *designed* unity. The narratives of the Gospels admit of the most manifold combinations, not because they are constructed artificially, but because they are true records of the Truth. Everything tends to show that the intricate relations which exist between them were not the result of any conscious purpose, but of that Inspiration which led the Evangelists to preserve only such details as have a lasting and representative interest.

This they did from different points of sight; and each special aspect of truth admits of a perfect combination with the others both in its parts and as a whole.

There is, indeed, at all times a danger lest the student may obtrude his own fancies into what should be a faithful representation of divine words; yet I may say that the contrasts and analogies of the Gospel-miracles which I have roughly outlined, were the results of a patient endeavour to gain in each case a distinct view of the special characteristics of the event. Whatever mistakes I may have made in apprehending the point of some of the narratives, I feel convinced that any one who will go over the same ground with a simple faith in the accuracy of language and a willingness to wait for a complete induction before he forms his conclusion, will arrive at results, if not identical with those which are sketched here, at least of the same kind. Of higher blessings which the Spirit of God still gives through the words which He inspired, I will not speak. Even as history the Gospels are unparalleled.

There is less need to insist now on the divine authority of the Gospels as a complete record of the work of the Saviour, than when, ten years since, my thoughts were first definitely directed to the comparative study of their special and common teaching. The interval has been most fruitful in the results of biblical labours; and among the many cheering signs of our own times, none is more cheering than the ever-increasing study which is bestowed upon the Holy Scriptures. In fostering this study, Cambridge has taken a foremost place by the various honours which it has been enabled to offer for its successful prosecution; and I may be allowed to bear witness from my own experience of the powerful influence which it thus exercises in directing the energies of its younger members to pursuits which, by God's blessing, issue in the noblest vindication of the Truth. Without any desire to overrate technical criticism, I cannot refrain from expressing with the deepest earnestness my belief that a study of the sacred texts which rests on the laws of the most rigorous scholarship, and is carried out

with the most candid appreciation of the various elements combined in the Apostolic age, will lead to the only convincing answer to the objections against the essential doctrines of Christianity, which are at present most current. The results of such a study cannot probably be produced in argument in their full integrity. They are the end and the reward of personal labour; and find their issue in the confirmation of personal faith. But if the conviction which springs from this kind of inquiry be in its essence incommunicable, the sources from which it may be drawn are infinite. The student may choose the field for his own inquiries with the certainty of a rich harvest. Let him take any group of lessons recorded in one of the Gospels—miracles, parables, discourses: let him notice their salient points and most minute traits: let him regard them in their relation to the whole narrative: let him then combine them with similar recitals contained in the other Gospels: and his feeling will be, a wonder, which increases with time, at the fulness and subtlety of the connections by

which each part of Holy Scripture is bound to all others; and this feeling is the noblest homage to its Inspiration.

Any one who has arrived by patient and individual labour at this sense of the absolute significance of every part of the Bible, which is, I believe, the sure reward of such a study of it as I have described, will not rest satisfied with its literal meaning only. The letter will never lose its truth or its value, but it will be felt to be the receptacle of a higher spirit. What are the laws of spiritual interpretation—how far they may be in fact contained implicitly in the spiritual interpretations of the Apostles themselves—has not, I believe, yet been determined; and perhaps they elude necessarily all mechanical expression. Meanwhile I have ventured to add a few characteristic quotations from two very accessible patristic commentaries, those of Ambrose and Hilary, which may suggest some thoughts to those who have not paid much attention to the symbolism of Holy Scripture, and lead the way to a candid consideration of a method of interpretation, which must not

be hastily set aside because it has been often disfigured by unlicensed fancies.

In speaking on such a subject as the study of Holy Scripture it is hard to pause; yet this is not the place to discuss at length the method by which it must be guided. Enough has been said to indicate the direction in which I believe that labour may be applied with the most certain prospect of success; and it is the first object of the Christian teacher to awaken in those who listen to him an interest in the principles of which he is himself convinced. It is sufficient for him if he can induce others to 'try like proved money-changers,' that which bears, as he holds, the image of a divine presence; and if what I have said leads to such a result, my whole purpose will have been gained. To those who seek it faithfully, God, in His own good time, will reveal the Truth.

B. F. W.

HARROW,
Lent, 1859.

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SERMON I.

THE MIRACLES ON NATURE.

St John II. 11.

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory.

SERM. I.

The services which commemorate the Epiphany offer a striking outline of the various ways in which Christ manifests Himself to men. From Sunday to Sunday He is presented to us in some marked scene, which conveys an abiding lesson in the living freshness of a fact. As an Infant He receives the adoration of the faithful and rouses the cruelty of the usurper[1]. As a Child He tarries in His father's house, and yet realizes a life of obedience and love in His earthly home[2]. The long period of preparation is past, and

[1] The Epiphany. Matt. ii. 1 ff.

[2] The first Sunday after the Epiphany. Luke ii. 46, 51 f.

SERM. I.

then in the independence of an open ministry He is seen to accomplish in quick succession works of power and mercy and righteousness, revealing the thoughts of men and the will of God[1]. Nor does the picture end here: His after-work is also set before us in two memorable images. For a time He is seen patiently watching the field in which He has laboured, as the Husbandman, whose sowing the enemy hath marred[2]. And at last the veil is raised from the future, and the Son of Man, the Infant, the Child, the mighty Saviour, the patient Watcher, is revealed in power and great glory, coming for judgment and triumph[3].

Among these various manifestations of Christ the event which is commemorated in the Gospel of the Day has a peculiar interest, which is shewn by the position which it occupies both in the Saviour's work, and in the 'Spiritual' Gospel. In old times it was chosen as the true Epiphany, as the first

[1] The second, third, and fourth Sundays after Epiphany. John ii. 1 ff.; Matt. viii. 1 ff.

[2] The fifth Sunday after the Epiphany. Matt. xiii. 24 ff.

[3] The sixth Sunday after the Epiphany. Matt. xxiv. 20 ff.

display of divine glory rather than of human worship. Some also, going yet further, held that the day of the marriage festival was the anniversary of the Nativity itself[1]; and however lightly we may regard the tradition on which these fancies rest, they still suggest the idea under which I desire, by God's help, to regard the Miracles of our Blessed Lord, as brought before us at this season. At another time I should have shrunk from a subject which transcends in many aspects all definite thought, but now I feel that it would be faithless to leave unspoken this message of Epiphany. The memories of Christmas are still fresh, and may remind us that the miracles are all faint reflections of the glory of the Incarnation. That is the miracle of miracles to which all others point. At first the partial exhibitions of Divine love served to lead men up to the apprehension of that one perfect central fact; and now they help us to contemplate its results. In this sense the miracles are themselves an Epiphany. They are essentially a part of the revelation,

SERM. I.

[1] Cf. Bingham, *Orig.* xx. 4, 2.

SERM. I. and not merely a proof of it: pledges of a redemption wrought, foreshadows of a redemption realized.

The wide and increasing differences by which we are separated from the last age invest the question of the Gospel-miracles with a practical interest which touches us all most nearly. Every new position which men take up with regard to the world around them brings with it a change of feeling. Old relations are disturbed by wider discoveries. Isolated facts are seen as parts of some vast system. Familiar objects are viewed under strange lights; and the mental reaction which follows the shaking of an old belief is always porportioned to the intensity with which it was held. In nothing has the change of feeling during the last century been more violent than in the popular estimation of miracles. At the beginning they were singled out as the master-proof of the Christian faith: now they are kept back as difficulties in the way of its reception. On the one hand, the proud advances of physical science, which place in a clearer light the

symmetry and order of external nature, invest the idea of law with an absolute majesty inconceivable at an earlier time. On the other, a strange love for the vivid realization of every incident presented to us, which is attested by the scenic histories of the day, makes us impatient of the mystery which hangs over the acts of a Divine Sovereign. We try to individualize the special event which is presented to us: we follow the process of its accomplishment with every help of local illustration; and exactly in proportion as it eludes our apprehension, exactly in proportion as it is miraculous, we say, consciously or unconsciously, that we cannot believe the isolated fact. It is irreconcilable in idea with the existence of a supreme law: it is inconceivable in detail by the fancy of the minute artist. In this way perhaps we pass from one record to another, and fail, baffled before each. Piece by piece the historic groundwork of our faith is taken away, and what remains of the superstructure trembles at the mercy of the first storm. SERM. I.

Such a result is not imaginary: it is

SERM. I. natural, and even necessary. The feelings to which it is due are a part of our peculiar trial; for they are the product of our peculiar civilization. As long as men remain the same, fresh knowledge brings fresh doubts; for as yet we only know in part. But the balance of strength and temptation is equally poised. As we are not placed *before* our forefathers in spiritual advantages, so neither are we placed *behind* them. The thought which suggests the doubt, will teach us to answer it. The same spirit of wide generalization which leads us to group the phenomena of nature under great and simple laws, will aid us to contemplate the facts of the Gospel as parts of a complete whole. The same spirit of exact portraiture, which leads us to seek for the test of truth in the rendering of the smallest details, will aid us to appreciate the characteristic marks by which they are distinguished. The miracles of the Gospel are *not* isolated facts; they are *not* vain repetitions. In meaning as well as in time, they lie between the Incarnation and the Ascension. They look back to the one event and forward to the

other, now bringing God to man and now raising man to God, as signs of the full accomplishment of Christ's earthly work. In this sense they are all one; and yet they are all different. Each has its proper lesson: each has its peculiar place. They speak to us in the various crises of life: they speak to us in the very presence of death: they speak to us in joy and sorrow—in the course of common duties—in the cares of home—in the house of God. And thus it is that they belong properly to the believer and not to the doubter. They are a treasure rather than a bulwark. They are in their inmost sense instruction, and not evidence. And yet as the Christian rises to a clearer perception of their distinctness and harmony; as he traces their simplicity and depth; as he sees their comprehensive variety and infinite significance: they do become an evidence of his faith —an evidence of power and wisdom—which issues not in the silence of repressed doubt, but in the thanksgiving of grateful praise.

Starting from this view of the miracles, as lessons of wisdom rather than displays of

SERM. I. omnipotence, as types of the Lord's working and partial applications of the great mystery of His coming, it is my desire to indicate generally their extent and connexion in the hope that some one may carry on the inquiry thus rudely outlined; and in doing this the successive services of the season fix the great divisions of the subject. The miracles of the Gospels are most simply classified by their reference to Nature, to Man, to the Spirit-world; and in this order they are brought before us on this and the following Sundays.

The very existence of such a division of the miracles marks at the outset the universality of their teaching. They are not confined to one object or to one sphere. They extend as far as the varied powers of man can venture, and open visions of hope in each of the cardinal points to which his thoughts are turned. In each direction they are charged with some peculiar message of hope, though all tend to the central truth of the redemption. Now they appear peculiarly as works of dominion, and nature yields once more to man the pledges of his sovereignty.

Now they are embodied in works of love, and man welcomes in his own person the types of his restoration. Now they are shown in works of judgment, and the great adversary announces, in the confession of despair, the advent of his hopeless ruin. Each of these aspects of the divine working will occupy our attention in turn. Each has a direct bearing towards our age and towards ourselves. Each is needful for the complete representation of the life of Christ, in Whom God united and reconciled all things that are in Heaven and upon earth.[1] SERM. I.

To-day we have to speak of the miracles on nature, among which the miracle at the Marriage Feast, 'the beginning of Christ's signs,' gives the key-note of their harmony. But the great tidings of this new 'peace on earth' are given in different forms. The miracles of nature answer in their twofold character to the twofold relation of Christ to the world which He made and which He upholds. Some are works of power, in which

[1] Eph. i. 10, *ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ*, compared with Col. i. 19, *ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν*.

SERM. I. the Creator is revealed to us in His absolute freedom; others are works of Providence, in which the Preserver is seen present in the order which reflects His will. In some the result itself is such as we cannot connect with any known causes: in others, the circumstances under which it occurs exclude the notion of a fortuitous coincidence. In the one case the elements obey; in the other the laws subserve. There we are allowed to catch glimpses of the glory of a higher being: here we are enabled to see the wisdom which guides what we call the accidents of the present world. There is no prodigality of display, but there is no room for misgiving. We can boldly look on nature, strong in the sternness of her order and terrible in the vastness of her force, with hope and confidence, through the might of Him, who has, as at this time, revealed Himself to us as Her Sovereign.

i. The miracle at Cana is the first of what I have called *miracles of power;* and as the first of Christ's 'signs' it is in a peculiar sense the pregnant type of His ministry[1].

[1] Thus, with a special reference to the prophecies of the Old Tes-

That turning of water into wine tells us of a new energy present among men, silently working for their blessing. It tells us of One who gives when He receives, and entertains when He is welcomed as a guest[1]. It tells us that at length, in the fulness of time, the springs of joy are ennobled, while the water of purification passes into the wine of gladness. The lesson of creative, sovereign power, which is thus conveyed, is further enforced and extended by the three other miracles which fall within the same class[2]. Of these two are like in their general features, yet most distinct in their spiritual import; nor can we marvel

tament, Augustine says (*Tract. in Joann.* IX. 5): 'Intellexerunt Christum in his libris in quibus eum non noverunt. Mutavit ergo aquam in vinum Dominus noster Jesus Christus, et sapit quod non sapiebat, inebriat quod non inebriabat.' This idea runs through the whole Lecture. The true reading in John ii. 11, *ταύτην ἐποίησεν ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων*, not *τὴν ἀρχήν*, marks the divine plan in the work.

[1] In this aspect the miracle may be compared with Luke xxiv. 30.

[2] The *Miracles of power* may be seen at a glance in the following table:

(1) *The water made wine:* John ii. 1—12.
Christ the source of joy.

(2) *The bread multiplied.*

(α) Matt. xiv. 15—21; Mark vi. 35—44; Luke ix. 12—17; John vi. 5—14.

SERM. I. if Christ twice showed Himself to be the bread of life, to the Jew first and to the Gentile; and prefigured by the breadth of His compassion the extent of a redemption which some would have limited to a chosen race[1].

(β) Matt. xv. 32—39; Mark viii. 1—10.
Christ the source of subsistence.

(3) *The walking on the water:* Matt. xiv. 22—36: Mark vi. 48, 49; John vi. 16—21.
Christ the source of strength.

The parallels to these miracles in the Old Testament offer the materials for an instructive comparison.

(1) The water turned into blood: Exod. vii. 19 ff. Cf. Exod. xv. 23 ff.; 2 Kings ii. 19 ff.

(2) The Manna sent: Exod. xvi. 4 ff. The meal and oil multiplied: 1 Kings xvii. 14 ff. The oil multiplied: 2 Kings iv. 1 ff. The men fed with the barley-loaves: 2 Kings iv. 42 ff.

(3) The passage of Jordan: Jos. iii. 14. Cf. 2 Kings ii. 8 (and perhaps the passage of the Red Sea: Exod. xiv. 21).

[1] Origen was the first who pointed out in detail the striking contrast which exists between the particulars of the two miracles of feeding the multitudes (*Comm. in Matt.* Tom. XI. 19), but he does not (at least in his present commentary) point to any difference of race by which the multitudes were distinguished. Hilary, however, who has evidently preserved many of the interpretations as well as much of the spirit of Origen, says (*Comm. in Matt.* xv. § 7): '*Supra Israelitarum nunc gentium fides exprimitur*—....ut quemadmodum illa Judaicæ credentium congruunt plebi ita hæc populo gentium comparentur.' The details of spiritual application which are given by Origen, are reproduced and enlarged by Hilary, and occur again in a Sermon added to the works of Augustine: *App.* Serm. LXXXI. § 4 (cf. *Hieron. Comm. in Matt.* ii. cap. xv. 33 ff.); and without insisting on them

Otherwise the teaching and details of the miracles of power are most different. Christ, Who is seen first at the social festival as the author of joy, appears afterwards to the fainting multitudes as the giver of subsistence, and to the lonely disciples as the present source of strength. The gift is varied with the recipients: the scene is varied with the gift. The chamber, the wilderness, and the stormy lake, witness the help of a Saviour, unpromised, unasked, unhoped for, in times of rejoicing, of exhaustion, of danger. SERM. I.

The difference which is seen in the outward

separately, they tend in the main to confirm the characteristic distinctness of the miracles. The place at which the second miracle was wrought (Mark vii. 31, *ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν ὁρίων Δεκαπόλεως*), and the striking words which describe the feelings of the people (Matt. xv. 31, *ἐδόξασαν τὸν Θεὸν Ἰσραήλ*), seem to leave no doubt that it was wrought for Gentiles. In this aspect it is not without interest to notice, as Origen and later writers have done, the more immediate action of the Lord in this miracle as compared with the former. Cf. Matt. xv. 32 with Matt. xiv. 15; Mark vi. 39 with Mark viii. 6. Nor is it possible to disregard the symbolism of the characteristic numbers (5000, 5, 12; 4000, 7, 7), however little the relations, which were at one time instinctively felt, are now apprehended in their full force, 'quos in Scripturis esse sacratissimos et mysteriorum plenissimos ex quibusdam quos inde nosse potuimus dignissime credimus' (Aug. *Quæst. in Gen.* 102). The Benedictine Index to Augustine will furnish examples of the constant interpretation of the different numbers. Cf. Crosnier, *Iconographie Chrétienne*, pp. 50 ff.

SERM. I. circumstances of these miracles, extends also to their essential nature. They are different not in degree, not in accident, but in kind. In one the substance, if I may use the term, remains the same and the properties are changed. In another, the properties remain the same and the substance is extended. In the third, that force which we regard as the most universal and the most constant, is made subservient to the control of human will. And to remark yet one point more: if we look to the human means by which the works were carried out, we find that the faith, which here as everywhere, works with Divine power, was shown under new relations. Now it brought a blessing in which it might not partake. Now it gave and received in giving. Now it was rewarded by a personal answer. The servants who had drawn water, bore it as wine to the ruler of the feast, trusting to His word Who was as yet revealed to few, and became ministers of a gift in which they did not share[1]. The Apostles, when they had

[1] There is nothing in the narrative (John ii. 1—12) which supports the common, or, as far as I know, universal, notion that

brought out their little store, bore it from their Master's hands to the waiting multitudes, and gathered in overflowing measure the gifts which they conveyed. The disciples welcomed their Lord as He came to them across the troubled waters, and found in Him the aid for which they were longing. SERM. I.

Yet beneath these traits, which fix what may be called the specific character of each event, and stamp it with an individual meaning, there are points of generic resemblance by which the whole group is itself distinguished. All the miracles of power are alike unimaginable and silent. It has been common from the earliest times to find analogies to them in the operations of nature. He changes water into wine every year, it is said, in the fruitful vineyard, Who so changed it once at the Marriage Feast[1]. He raises the seed-

the water in the six jars for purification was turned into wine. Indeed the exact words seem to exclude such a notion. For would ἀντλεῖν be used, and in the connexion ἀντλήσατε νῦν καὶ φέρετε τῷ ἀρχιτρικλίνῳ, if the water were drawn no longer from the same source as before, but from the vessels already filled? The interpretation thus suggested, which removes some difficulties which have been raised as to the form of the miracle, seems at the same time to give additional force to its spiritual meaning.

[1] Aug. *In Joann.* ix. 1, 'Diximus, sicut meministis, resurrexit

SERM. I.

corn into the waving harvest, Who multiplied the few loaves to satisfy the thousands who followed Him[1]. The corpse hangs heavy upon the arms which bore with ease the living burden[2]. But in such illustrations there is no true parallel. In those cases God reveals His working according to the course of life. We can explain the phenomena by the observation of known laws. We can trace each step in the process of the growth: we can point to the source of each new element which is embodied in the plant: we can discover the changed conditions which produce the semblance of an essential change. In miracles of power it is not so. No mind can realize

unus mortuus, obstupuerunt homines; cum quotidie qui non erant nemo miretur. Sic aquam in vinum conversam quis non miretur, cum hoc annis omnibus Deus in vitibus faciat.' The illustration is a favourite one with Augustine. Cf. *Serm.* CXXVI. 4. One phrase which he constantly repeats cannot be repeated too often: 'Omnia plena sunt miraculis sed assiduitate viluerunt.'

[1] Aug. *Enarr. in Ps.* XC. § 6. 'Fontes panis erant in manibus Domini. Non est mirum: nam ipse fecit de quinque panibus multum panis unde saturaret tot millia, qui facit quotidie in terra de paucis granis messes ingentes.' Cf. *In Joann.* XXIV. 1. *Serm.* CXXX. 1.

[2] Dean Trench, *On the Miracles*, p. 285. "In regard of this very law of gravity, a feeble, and for the most part unconsciously perceived, remnant of the power survives to man in the well-attested fact that his body *is* [? seems] lighter when he is awake than sleeping."

distinctly the changes wrought in them, much less the details of their becoming. If we try to realize them, our thoughts will wander in an instant. Yet even thus the sovereign works of the Gospel are not without a true analogy in the final facts of nature. They are a beginning—the first-fruits of a new order, the pledges of a new power—and so bid us look from an established course to the origin of things. Some creative acts we are forced to admit by the very constitution of our minds, and creative acts form a necessary part of the signs of the new creation. All such acts alike transcend our thought, but the Gospel introduces no new difficulty when it places an old one before us. The first origin of the world and the perpetual communication of life, are not less mysterious, if we fairly contemplate the conditions which they involve, than the threefold miracles of power. Those two great facts of beginning and continuance, limit our knowledge of nature, and lead us to look beyond nature. They also are unimaginable; and yet they *are*. SERM. I.

Nor is it in this point of inconceivableness

SERM. I. only that the miracles of power—the creative signs—are allied to the primal creation. They are silent as well as unimaginable. They were veiled at first in the same obscurity as all beginning. Their significance was revealed only by thought. Elsewhere the Saviour's working was followed by praise, by wonder, by conviction; but in these miracles it seems, at the time, hardly to have been regarded at all. They were not, so to speak, the ground but the end of faith. They were felt to be signs in proportion as men believed already. The master of the feast knew not whence the wine came, and only those who were disciples were confirmed in their trust[1]. The Apostles 'understood not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardened[2].' Only when Jesus 'went up unto them into the ship and the wind ceased',—when a work of providence followed a work of power—'they were sore amazed in themselves beyond mea-

[1] John ii. 11.

[2] Mark vi. 52, ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν ἡ καρδία πεπωρωμένη. This fact helps to explain their hesitation afterwards: Mark viii. 4; and the same word is used of them by our Lord even after the second miracle: Mark viii. 17. In this respect compare John vi. 14 with vi. 26 ff.

sure and wondered[1],' and 'they that were in the ship worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God[2].' SERM. I.

In addition to their inconceivableness and their silence, there is yet one other characteristic of the miracles of power which throws a light upon their relation to ourselves. They were wrought upon the confession of a want. 'They have no wine,' were the words which moved the Lord to the exertion of His will even when He fixed the limits of a mother's authority[3]. The answer of Philip was still required, as Jesus 'tried' him, though 'He knew Himself what He would do[4].' The disciples were first '*constrained*' to enter into the ship, that they might more fully apprehend the blessing of His presence from Whom they were unwilling to be separated[5].

[1] Mark vi. 51.

[2] Matt. xiv. 33. Cf. Hilar. *ad loc.* 'Post claritatis suæ reditum æterna ecclesiæ pax et tranquillitas indicatur....Confessio enim universorum tum et absoluta et publica erit, Dei filium non jam in humilitate corporea sed in gloria cœlesti pacem ecclesiæ reddidisse.' The interpretation thus indicated is pregnant with thoughts.

[3] John ii. 3, οἶνον οὐκ ἔχουσιν—τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι; Cf. xix. 26.

[4] John vi. 6.

[5] Matt. xiv. 22; Mark vi. 45. Hieron. *ad loc.* 'Compulit ut ascenderent naviculam ...dum amore præceptoris ne punctum

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The lesson lies upon the surface. Works of noblest glory show us that there is an intelligible prayer even in the silent acknowledgment of weakness. And at last the deficiency is not removed, but supplied: the want is not silenced, but satisfied: the labour is not dispensed with, but prospered[1]. Effort not only precedes but carries to its end the aid of God; and our need must be felt, felt deeply, I had almost said, felt hopelessly, before Christ gives us His help; though that consciousness of need is itself the herald of present strength.

ii. When we pass from the miracles of power to the *miracles of providence* several differences appear at first sight[2]. Those were in common language unimaginable: these are

quidem temporis ab eo volunt separari.' Cf. Orig. *Comm. in Matt.* Tom. XI. § 5, ἀναγκάζει—ἐμβῆναι εἰς τὸ πλοῖον τῶν πειρασμῶν ὁ Σωτήρ, κ.τ.λ.

[1] John vi. 21, ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

[2] The *Miracles of Providence* may be arranged in the following order:

(a) Miracles of blessing.

(1) *The first miraculous draught of fishes:* Luke v. 1—11.
The formation of the outward Church.

(2) *The storm stilled:* Matt. viii. 23—27; Mark iv. 35—41; Luke viii. 22—25.
The defence of the Church from without.

natural. Those were works of silence: these of awakening. Those were to satisfy a real want: these to meet an admitted inferiority. There the blessing was given and used: here it is given and relinquished[1]. There the symbolic scene is varied in almost every detail: here it is generally the same. The unexpected haul, the sudden lull of a storm in a mountain-lake, the coin in the fish's mouth, are incidents to which common experience can furnish abundant parallels. The miracle lies in the circumstances and not in the mere fact. We can, in a certain sense, explain the events, and watch their progress; but that which lessens our wonder increased their immediate effect. No veil was cast over their full brightness. They came to men

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(3) *The stater in the fish's mouth:* Matt. xvii. 24—27. The support of the Church from within.

(4) *The second miraculous draught of fishes:* John xxi. 1—23. The Church of the future.

(β) Miracle of Judgment.

The fig-tree cursed: Matt. xxi. 19 ff.; Mark xi. 20 ff.

Though Miracles of Providence are common in the Old Testament, none appear to offer a clear parallel to these, which in their spiritual import are miracles of the Church and not of the nation. Cf. p. 27.

[1] Cf. Ambros. *ad Luc.* iv. § 78. 'Quos [Petrus] in Verbo capit Verbo credit: negat suam prædam, negat suum munus.'

SERM. I. from the sphere of their daily labour, and were at once felt to be manifestations of a present power of God. 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man,' was the first cry of St Peter when he found himself face to face with the Author of the mighty work. 'It is the Lord,' were the words of St John when Jesus repeated the sign a second time after His Resurrection[1].

This outward contrast might be carried yet further into detail; but there is a yet deeper contrast between the miracles of power and of providence in their spiritual meaning. The former are signs of a new creation: the latter are signs of a new course. In the former the wine of gladness and the bread of life and the upholding will, speak of blessings assured to men: in the latter the fisher's work is a type of the human ministry by which the blessings are realized. There we see the source and character of the Christian life: here the formation and support of the Christian body. In this way the continuity and likeness of the imagery is a help towards

[1] Luke v. 8; John xxi. 6, 7.

understanding the unity of the lesson, as Christ manifests His power over that mysterious sea, which, with its wild tempests and secret treasures, is the aptest image of the world upon which the ark of the Church is cast[1].

It would carry me too far if I were to try to trace in detail the distinctive teaching of the miracles of providence. The broad outlines of their prophetic meaning are too clear to be mistaken. Now we see the perils, nay even the schisms of the outward Church, imaged in sinking ships, and breaking nets. Now we see the fulness of the final blessing in the counted store which is gathered on the land[2]. Here the lesson of faith is taught by the calming of the storm; there the lesson of charity in the combination of perfect obedience and sovereign majesty[3].

[1] The great importance of the *Sea* as a biblical symbol is sufficiently shewn by Apoc. xxi. 1, as compared with Gen. i. 2; 2 Chron. iv. 2—4. Its general significance is fixed by common instinct. Cf. August. *Confess.* XIII. 28; *Enarr. in Ps.* lxiv. 9, &c.

[2] Luke v. 6, 7, contrasted with John xxi. 8, 11. The points of difference are brought out in detail by Augustine: *In Joann. Tract.* CXXII. 7.

[3] The two points in the miracle of the Stater in the fish's mouth, which seem to mark its meaning, are (1) The gracious obedience to a

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So far the scene of the miracles is the Galilæan lake; and their message is one of hope and blessing. But there is one other miracle of providence which stands in striking contrast to the rest. The scene, the symbol, the issue, are all changed. Once, and once only, the Lord pronounced a fearful sentence on that which did not satisfy *His* wants[1]. Not in the display of arbitrary power, for He had silenced the solicitations of the Tempter: not in the pressure of personal need, for this was forgotten by the well-side at Samaria; but in terrible justice He spoke the words of condemnation. As He entered into Jerusalem parable and miracle were combined in one work of judgment. Elsewhere He portrayed the growth, the preservation, the support, of the Church, but now He bore witness against its barrenness. The fruitless fig-tree challenged His notice by its

ritual requirement to prevent offence (Matt. xvii. 27, *ἵνα μὴ σκανδαλίσωμεν αὐτούς*), and (2) The sovereign power which vindicates the independence which is not asserted in act.

[1] The symbol—the fig-tree—turns our thoughts to Luke xiii. 6; xxi. 29 (John i. 49). Hilary (*Comm. in Matt.* ad loc.) points out the fitness of the tree to represent the synagogue in this place, but I do not remember to have seen any more general view.

show of leaves, and straightway withered at His curse. Yet even here, in the moment of sorrowful disappointment, as He turned to His disciples, the word of judgment became a word of promise. 'Have faith in God; and whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye received (ἐλάβετε) them,' —received them already at the inspiration of the wish,—'and ye shall have them[1].' SERM. I.

This miracle of judgment completes the cycle of the miracles of nature. Within the narrow limits of nine symbolic acts the spring and course of the Christian life is laid open. An answer of power is given to the wants of men; an answer of providence is given to their labours. The character and form of the answers vary with the typical circumstances which called them forth. But in one respect all the miracles are alike. They are spontaneous. The want or weakness which furnished the occasion of the miracle was not expressed in any prayer, which besought the intervention. They were essentially *kingly*

[1] Mark xi. 24.

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works[1]: the works of the great Ruler, Whose eye watches over the world which He made, and Whose will finds expression in its general laws. Elsewhere men lay their needs before the Saviour and ask His help, but here they work on in patience and fulfil His word. For even here the blessing comes not without human means, but through them. When the wine was exhausted, yet water was drawn. The supply of food which the apostles could find, however small, was yet used. The disciples had toiled hard in rowing through the night when Jesus came to guide them to the shore. In the other cases the very miracle came as the *natural* issue of common labour. The lesson which is thus written is one which we may not disregard. The mightiest works of Christ give no encouragement to fanaticism, or rather are the truest safeguard against it. In the face of the great laws of nature, we are taught not to stand idly waiting, or even

[1] Ewald, *Christus, u. s. w.* pp. 189 ff. follows out this idea in many beautiful remarks. However much I may differ from this great writer, I cannot but pay reverence to that profound feeling for spiritual truth which distinguishes all he writes from the mass of German 'criticism.'

idly praying, but to work on bravely, each with our scanty means, each in our proper place, as knowing that God in His own good time will bless both us and them. SERM. I.

The rapid outline of the Gospel miracles on nature which has been given, will, I trust, be sufficient to suggest the true idea of their mutual dependence and general unity as a Revelation, an Epiphany of Christ. In this respect their unity and distinctness is seen still more clearly if we compare them with the corresponding miracles of the Old Testament, in which signs of providence are the characteristic method of God's working. There is indeed a progress in the Old Testament itself; but though it would be instructive to compare in detail the miracles of Moses and Joshua with those of Elijah and Elisha, the miracles of the Law with the miracles of the Prophets, in relation to one another, and to the miracles of Christ, I can only notice the common features by which the earlier signs are distinguished from those of the Gospel. Their first difference lies in the fundamental contrast of the two dispensations. It belonged to the

SERM. I. very scope of Judaism, that in it miracles of chastisement should predominate over miracles of blessing, or rather that blessing should be wrought by judgment. The first miracle of Moses after his work began, was a turning of water into blood, foreshowing a broad development of natural life in the face of foes without and within : the first miracle of Christ was a changing of water into wine, foreshowing the transfiguration of common joy by the presence of a heavenly guest[1]. There the Lord of Hosts stands preeminent over the gods of the heathen, *answering by fire*[2]; here the Saviour brings the fulness of blessing out of a disordered world. There the mighty works were wrought by God's minister in the name of God, to declare His sovereignty; here they are wrought by Christ as the Incarnate Son to show the restored sovereignty of man. And yet more than this: under the

[1] This striking contrast, which Strauss turned into an objection (*Leben Jesu*, § 102), is most justly insisted on by Dean Trench, *Notes on the Miracles*, p. 112. I do not remember any passage in an early writer in which the contrast is noticed, though some such must exist.

[2] 1 Kings xviii. 24 ff.

Law the miracles were given specially to attest the messenger, that men might know that the Lord had sent him: in the Gospel they are peculiarly part of the work, part of the message; or, if Christ *once* confirmed His word by an outward sign, it was to convey the most comforting of spiritual promises, to give a sacrament of pardon in restored strength, that we might know that *the Son of Man hath power on earth* not to declare the word of the Lord only, but *to forgive sins*[1]. SERM. I.

The connexion between a sign and an inward truth which is revealed in these words, underlies all the other miracles of the Gospel[2]. They are, as I have said, a part of its revelation, and, like all other parts of it, they speak not to one generation only, but to all. They bear different tidings from heaven at different times, as our thoughts and knowledge widen, but they always bear some tidings[3]. Chris-

[1] Matt. ix. 6, and parallels.

[2] Hil. *Comm. in Matt.* viii. 7, 8. 'Non nos intelligentiam pingimus, sed gesta ipsa nobis intelligentiam impertiuntur. Neque enim res intelligentiæ sed rei intelligentia subsecundat.'

[3] Augustine (*Serm.* XCVIII. 3) has a beautiful image in which he likens the man who sees the outward side of the miracle only to one

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tianity remains the same, but *men* change. That which is a support of faith in one age may be a trial of faith in another. We *cannot* view miracles as the first Christians viewed them, for we live in another world. To them our idea of a miracle was impossible. The exceptional was still in itself miraculous; and the general silence of the early apologists is a symptom of the prevailing feeling. But in the midst of the most varied progress, the moral significance of the Gospel miracles remains unaltered. They always stand so far in advance of our knowledge as to hold the same constant relation to the regions of experience and faith. In early times, little distinction would have been drawn between different classes of miracles, miracles of nature and of humanity, miracles of power and of providence; and now, when we can see more clearly their different bearings, they are found to convey one harmonious lesson on each of

who, being without the ability to read, admires the fair writing of a manuscript, which to the student is instinct with wisdom—'oculis laudatur, mente non cognitur.' Compare also *Serm.* LXXXVIII. 1, in which he argues from the transitoriness of the effects of the miracles to the reality of some other abiding lesson in them.

the great divisions of knowledge. The present laws of force and substance are once for all subjected to the Saviour, that we may look onwards in hope to the glories of a new heaven and a new earth. The veil is raised from the mysterious concurrence of events, that we may learn to work with confidence in the economy of the present world. The signs which are given us are enough to kindle our faith, enough to raise us from a blind idolatry of physical laws, enough to quicken us with the consciousness of some nobler Presence, of some higher Power, and yet not so frequent as to bring confusion or uncertainty into that order which however marred, is yet God's work. With a voice of boundless authority and gentlest comfort, they tell us that the creative energy which we find not only in the first origin of things, but also in successive epochs, is not yet exhausted. They tell us that we are not bound up in a system which is eternal and unchangeable. They tell us that there is yet before us a noble transformation, a higher life. They tell us that the beginning of this

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is already made, and that it is ours to hasten the end.

And even now in the midst of our imperfect and inconstant struggles, the promises which shall one day be fully realized, find a partial accomplishment. The wine which flowed at Cana, flows still, as often as we welcome Christ for our guest. The bread which sustained the multitudes in the desert, the true bread, is offered to us by the very commandment of the Lord. The powers of nature yield to the heroic soul as often as it dares to be fearless. Not in old time only, but now, now in this age of faithless disquiet and restless zeal, Christ is seen as the Creator and Preserver, transfiguring our common joys, ministering to our common wants, calming the storms which threaten to overwhelm us, and vindicating His supremacy over the elements among which our life is thrown. It may be that the courses of storms, the instinctive movements of the lower creation, the very actions of men, are dependent on general and certain laws; yet these laws are the expression of His will, Who knows

and sees their fulfilment, who bids us do our work for His glory, and assures of success. That work is as long as life, and often we must leave it unfinished; yet even so let us work on towards the unseen and for the eternal. It may seem that the favourable moment is already past when some special command comes to us[1]; it may seem that experience has shewn the uselessness of labour[2]; yet even so Christ's word is a promise, and cannot always fail. We may find ourselves committed in some way to the support of that which is essentially temporal and evanescent; yet even so, the truest dignity is manifested in the most loyal obedience[3]. Nay, fear most terrible of all, we may believe that not we only, but Christ Himself is endangered in the rising tempest, and seek to rouse Him with our despairing cries; yet even so, He is still with us—with us though sleeping—and it were better that He should not chide us for our little faith[4]. SERM. I.

[1] Cf. John xxi. 3.

[2] Cf. Luke v. 5.

[3] Cf. Matt. xvii. 26, 27.

[4] Cf. Mark iv. 38 ff. Matt. viii. 25, Κύριε σῶσον, not as in the common text, Κύριε σῶσον ἡμᾶς.

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Nor is it in times of action and effort only that Christ's miracles of nature speak with comfort to our hearts. There is scarcely one of us, I fancy, who has not at some time stood alone, face to face with some of the grander spectacles of the outer world, with a mountain throned in calm cold majesty, or with the starry sky, fearful in its impenetrable depth, till he has felt the cry of David rise to his lips as the utterance of hopeless despair; and then it is that the thought of Christ, the Sovereign and the Redeemer, converts the very words of despondency into a hymn of triumph[1].

We recall the events of our past life in silent review, and trace back our position, our habits, our character, to some trivial cause, to an idle rumour, a chance meeting, at most to some accident of birth or place; and as we are tempted to ascribe all to blind fate, the old scenes by the Galilean lake confirm by living proofs the great truth that 'Chance also is the daughter of Forethought,' so that the least details of life are ennobled by the

[1] Ps. viii. 4 compared with Hebr. ii. 5 ff.

thought which threatened to rob the whole of its dignity[1]. SERM. I.

In seasons of vigorous exertion, in seasons of silent reflection, the same memories recur. May we only cherish the truth which they teach. May we cherish it in thought, in study, in action. May we cherish it as the great Sacrament of a world-wide redemption. And as we look beyond time and beneath the fair imagery of a world which passeth away, may we in the strength of the Gospels look up with unwavering faith to a Lord of power, and a Lord of providence, '*great in counsel and mighty in work*[2].'

[1] Alcman, f. 55 (45) ed. Bergk.

[Τύχα] Εὐνομίας τε καὶ Πειθοῦς ἀδελφὰ
καὶ Προμαθείας θυγάτηρ.

The threefold offspring of Forethought which is described in this noble fragment appears to represent three of the cardinal relations in which we may regard the working of Providence. It first appears as Chance in regard to its occurrence: it next works Persuasion as men bow to its decrees; and at last it issues in Order.

[2] Jerem. xxxii. 19.

SERMON II.

THE MIRACLES ON MAN.

St. Matthew VIII. 13.

Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.

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Last Sunday our thoughts were directed to some of the characteristics of Christ's miracles on nature. I endeavoured to show that they contain at once a prophecy and a revelation—a prophecy of a more glorious world, a revelation of a present God. And in this latter aspect they were seen to be in part a silent vindication of the creative Power which still works from age to age,[1] in part the open display of a Providence, allseeing as well as almighty. Their practical influence was found to tend at once to strengthen and to ennoble the conduct of our daily life.

[1] John v. 17.

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The signs which Christ wrought in the material world were so interpreted as, on the one side, to confirm our faith in general laws, by showing them as present in their most complex results to the mind of Him in Whom we live and move and have our being[1], and on the other, to raise us above a blind idolatry of their order by the partial manifestation of results which transcend them. To-day we are led to consider a second form of Christ's working, His miracles on man as the victim of disease and death, while those other maladies which are specially referred to an immediate spiritual source are reserved for future inquiry. The former was an Epiphany of sovereignty: this is an Epiphany of mercy. Then we dwelt on the image of a *Lord*, to-day we shall dwell on the image of a *Saviour*.

The contrast which is involved in this broad distinction indicates a real progress. The redemption of man, even of the body of

[1] Acts xvii. 28, ἐν αὐτῷ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν. It is impossible not to notice the climax of the thought, as all being is contemplated in God from complex life to simplest existence.

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man, is more glorious than the redemption of nature, for that is involved in it[1]. Nor is it without significance in this respect that miracles of healing occupy so large a place among the miracles of the Gospel. In the period of the Law they are, unless I am mistaken, absolutely confined to the removal of special plagues[2]; and under the Prophets a few acts of startling power rather awaken the hope of a deliverance from physical evil, than satisfy it[3]. In the New Testament, on the other hand, it might seem as if every great form of disease were brought before the Saviour, that He might show that only an enemy had brought it among men. Work followed work in the manifestation of individual or general mercy, with ever-widening lessons of spiritual import, till all was consummated in the crowning act of the raising

[1] Cf. Rom. viii. 19 ff.

[2] Exod. iv. 6, 7 (the leprous hand); ix. 8 (the plague of boils); Numb. xii. 10 ff. (the leprosy of Miriam); xxi. 6 ff. (the plague of serpents). These stand in clear contrast with common diseases.

[3] 1 Kings xvii. 17 ff. (the widow's son raised by Elijah); 2 Kings iv. 18 ff. (the Shunammite's son raised by Elisha); v. 1 ff. (Naaman healed of leprosy). Cf. Isai. xx. 5, 7.

of Lazarus, the last and clearest type of the Resurrection.

If the signs of a coming restoration are thus plain and manifold, they appeared with still brighter lustre in the gloom which was spread abroad. At no time, perhaps, was the need of a Saviour more keenly felt than when the heavenly message of great joy to all God's people was first given to the shepherds at their nightly work[1]. Never, perhaps, was sorrow more widely extended or suffering more poignant, than in the first age. When it was otherwise, it was too often that men were 'past feeling[2].' The greatness of Roman will, the completeness of Roman organization, the very pride of Roman tyranny, hold us by a strange fascination, so that we cannot count the cost at which the Empire was founded and maintained. It is needless to draw again a picture with which we are all

[1] Luke ii. 10, *παντὶ τῷ λαῷ*. Cf. John. xi. 50; xviii. 14. Acts xxvi. 17, 23. The Jews, as 'God's people,' in a special sense, were thus a figure of all His people in the fullest meaning of the term.

[2] Eph. iv. 19, *ἀπηλγηκότες* ('qui postquam peccaverint non dolent: qui nequaquam sentientes ruinam suam in pronum feruntur.' Hieron. *ad loc.*). The *var. lect.* *ἀπηλπικότες* expresses a similar idea much more feebly.

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familiar, and which St Paul has painted[1]. The corruption of life and thought, the severance of theory and action, was as inevitable as it was pervading. It is vain to suppose that the effects of nearly a century of civil wars, the disruption of social intercourse and the desolation of family life, could be removed by the will of the conqueror. The Roman peace was the peace of exhaustion, and not of contentment[2]. The practice of suicide was a topic for the exhortations of philosophers, and a restless impatience of life carried men beyond the limits which they laid down[3]. Poets spoke of a new age, but they felt that it was still future. They foresaw by some divine instinct the second birth of the world, but they forgot the pangs by which it must be ushered in.

The woes which were hidden from the eyes of poets were all open before Him Who

[1] Rom. i. 18 ff.

[2] Cf. Tac. *Ann.* xii. 33, 'qui *pacem nostram* metuebant,' with the notes. *Agric.* 30 [Romani] 'ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.'

[3] Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 58, 32 ff. One sentence is sufficient: 'Qui vim afferendam vitæ suæ [negat]...non videt se libertatis viam claudere. Nil melius æterna lex fecit quam quod unum introitum nobis ad vitam dedit, exitus multos.'

was present to heal them. The signs of present magnificence spoke to Him only of speedy ruin[1]. His work was not to give light only, but to cast fire upon earth; not to inform only, but to consume[2]. And more than this. As He looked *onward* to the distress of nations and the afflictions of men, to wars and pestilences, to signs in heaven and earth[3], He looked *inward* to their hidden source. All experience tells us of the mysterious connexion between physical and moral evil, which seems to lie necessarily in the constitution of our twofold nature; but what is to us an incidental fact, was to Christ an ever-present truth. To him sickness and pain, desolation and bereavement, were but symptoms of a deeper-lying malady. To Him the fever, like

[1] Matt. xxiv. 1 ff.

[2] Luke xii. 49.

[3] The short summary with which Tacitus opens his history of the period to which our Lord's words specially refer (Matt. xxiv. 6 ff.), seem like an echo of them: 'Opus aggredior opimum casibus, atrox prœliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace sævum...Haustæ aut obrutæ urbes, fecundissima Campaniæ ora...Pollutæ cæremoniæ, magna adulteria...Corrupti in dominos servi, in patronos liberti; et quibus deerat inimicus, per amicos oppressi' (Tac. *Hist.* I. 2). Yet this dark picture was not without relief, for Christianity found a welcome throughout the Roman world.

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the storm, appeared as a personal reality, while he 'rebuked' its violence[1]. His 'compassion' was moved no less by the multitudes vexed (ἐσκυλμένοι) and fainting who hung upon His words, than by the cry of the blind, the misery of the leper, or the silent sorrow of the widow[2]. His tears, as we know, were shed over the city which by its faithlessness was doomed to destruction, and by the grave which was closed in hopeless sorrow. Each expression of feeling points to the same lesson. In Christ suffering is revealed to us in its terrible reality, as the correlative of sin, and death as its final consummation.

From this point of sight, the Gospel miracles of healing are presented to us as a revelation of hope, of restoration, of forgiveness—of hope, as wrought in an age of signal

[1] Matt. viii. 26, and parallels compared with Luke iv. 39 (ἐπετίμησεν τῷ πυρετῷ). Perhaps the words imply, as is suggested to me, a spiritual agency.

[2] The 'compassion' (σπλαγχνίζομαι) of our Lord is noticed only in the following places of the Gospels: Matt. ix. 36; Matt. xiv. 14 || Mark vi. 34; Matt. xv. 32 || Mark viii. 2 (of the multitudes who crowded to Him); Matt. xx. 34 (of the blind at Jericho); Mark i. 41 (of the leper); Luke vii. 13 (of the widow of Nain). The word elsewhere occurs Matt. xviii. 27; Mark ix. 22; Luke x. 33; xv. 20.

distress; of restoration, in the universality of their extent; of forgiveness, in the spiritual antitypes of their working. And if we take this larger view of their essential nature, I do not see how we can conceive of the action of a Divine Saviour without such deeds of love. A Gospel without miracles would be, if I may use the image, like a Church without sacraments. The outward pledge of the spiritual gift would be wanting. Teaching and example would remain, but faith would find no way opened to 'the world to come.'

Nor can it be without use to remark, especially in these miracles on man, that they are works of Christ in the fulness of His double Nature. Each partial view robs them of an essential part of their significance, and offers an excuse to the objector. They are not deeds of His Divine Nature only, for then they would cease to contain any element of instruction for men. They are not deeds of His human Nature only, for then they would be emptied of their special promise. On the one side they would become 'prodi-

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gies' (*τέρατα*), on the other 'powers' (*δυνάμεις*), but they would cease to be 'signs' of a coming kingdom, 'works' of an abiding Saviour. In the miracles, as elsewhere, a perfect manhood acts in absolute harmony with a perfect Divinity. In these revelations of His glory Christ works, not as God only but as man; and we must not forget the reality of the conflict in the contemplation of the triumph. From time to time the inward struggle is revealed to us, of which the outward act was the issue. Depths of natural feeling are disclosed by the Evangelists in the emotions of anger and surprise and grief[1]. In this aspect each work of the Saviour was in the strictest sense a victory, the result of effort and suffering, even as His whole life was a sacrifice. Each in its special bearing foreshadowed the great end in its agony as well as in its glory. He took, took to Himself,

[1] (*α*) *Anger.* Mark iii. 5, *καὶ περιβλεψάμενος αὐτοὺς μετ' ὀργῆς, συνλυπούμενος ἐπὶ τῇ πωρώσει τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν* (Cf. Mark i. 41, *ὀργισθείς* D).

(*β*) *Surprise.* Matt. viii. 10 || Luke vii. 9 (of the centurion's faith); Mark vi. 6, *ἐθαύμαζεν διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν.*

(*γ*) *Grief.* Mark iii. 5, *supr.* John xi. 35 (cf. vv. 33, 38, *ἐνβριμᾶσθαι*); Mark vii. 34, *ἐστέναξεν.*

the infirmities which He removed from others; bare, bare in His own Person, the sicknesses which He healed. He wrought, as St Matthew teaches us in these words of the prophet, not only by the expression of an Almighty will, but by the power of a redemptive sympathy[1]. He not only laboured *for* men but felt *with* them, and they with Him. He condescended to the use of natural means to support faith which was imperfect: He performed symbolic actions to call out faith which was latent[2]. And there were times when all was unavailing, times when He *could* do no mighty works as He marvelled at men's unbelief[3]. Yet it was not always so. His words of love often kindled in others

[1] Matt. viii. 17 = Isai. liii. 4. Even Hilary, however much inclined naturally to soften down the full meaning of the words, gives the right interpretation: 'Omnium peccata dimittens, omnium infirmitates conferens...passione corporis sui, secundum prophetarum dicta, infirmitates humanæ imbecillitatis absorbens' (Hil. *Comm. in Matt.* ad loc.) Cf. Athanas. *De Incarn.* 5, p. 688, *τὸ γὰρ πάθος* [Χριστοῦ] *ἡμῶν ἀπάθειά ἐστι· καὶ ὁ θάνατος αὐτοῦ, ἡμῶν ἀθανασία· καὶ τὸ δάκρυον αὐτοῦ, χαρὰ ἡμετέρα, κ.τ.λ.*

[2] Cf. pp. 57 f.

[3] Mark vi. 5 (Cf. Matt. xiii. 58), *οὐκ ἐδύνατο ἐκεῖ ποιῆσαι οὐδεμίαν δύναμιν εἰ μὴ ὀλίγοις ἀρρώστοις ἐπιθεὶς τὰς χεῖρας ἐθεράπευσεν.* In the record of our Lord's miracles *ἄρρωστος* occurs again, Matth. xiv. 14. Cf. Mark vi. 13; xvi. 18.

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love scarcely less; and an intensity of devotion seems on rare occasions to have anticipated the special working of His will. Men threw themselves on Him without waiting for His outstretched hand; and found even in that imperfect union the relief of their sufferings. They came first to hear Him; and then as He stood before them, surrounded by the Apostles, in the open character of the great Lawgiver, 'the whole multitude sought to touch Him; for virtue went out of Him and healed them all[1].'

This marvellous interworking of will and faith, of active and receptive power, which penetrates our whole life, leads us to that point in the miracles of healing to which I wish particularly to refer. They are not only pledges of hope and restoration, but they prefigure also the different modes in which man is brought into union with God. They are the peculiar miracles of humanity; bodily ailments are, as all language bears witness,

[1] Luke vi. 19, *δύναμις παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐξήρχετο καὶ ἰᾶτο πάντας.* Cf. Luke v. 17 (Matt. xiv. 36; Mark iii. 10; v. 27, infr. p. 56). At a later time we see a yet more strange form of the divine working: Acts v. 15 (St Peter); xix. 12 (St Paul).

types of spiritual disease; and the deliverance from an outward plague foreshows the manner of God's unseen working in all ages. The record of the Redemption is written in facts which arrest the attention by their startling forms, but its power is still realized on earth. How it is realized, the Gospels tell us by commemorating its first victories. For, viewed in their moral aspect, the miracles of healing fall into three classes, which express the varied sources of all Divine fellowship At one time the blessing is granted to the prayer of the sufferer, at another to the mediation of friends, and at another it springs from the spontaneous mercy of Him Who marks the secret or unconscious wish no less than the open cry. They are works of faith, of intercession, of love. The equal distribution of the miracles into these three classes is itself suggestive of a truth too often forgotten. It must, I think, appear strange at first sight that no more personal gifts are drawn from heaven by the personal prayer of the suppliant, than come from the intercession of others or from the unsought love of God.

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Here at least we might have fancied that the petition would be hearty, the want defined, the answer immediate; yet it is here especially that we are taught to look without ourselves. It is in spiritual as in social life: we cannot live alone. Our hope or strength fails us, and we are sustained by another's prayer. Our sight is dimmed, and another guides us to the true Light. Our tongue is bound, and another brings us to the living Word. We are at the point of death, and another wins for us the message of life.

i. The miracles of healing in which personal faith is prominently brought forward extend to the two typical forms of disease, characterized by an organic defect and a chronic impurity[1]. The blind[2] and the leper lay their own woes before Christ, while the palsied

[1] The Gospel miracles of healing may be arranged as follows, according to the divisions above mentioned:

(1) *Miracles of personal faith.*

(*a*) *Organic defects.*

The *blind:*

(*a*) Faith *special:*

The two blind men in the house.

Matt. ix. 29—31.

and the feverstricken wait for the intervention of others. Within these necessary limits the miracles of faith at once exhibit its trials, and

(*b*) Faith *absolute:*

Bartimæus restored.
Matt. xx. 29—34; Mark x. 46—52; Luke xviii. 35—43.

(*β*) *Chronic impurity.*

1. *Open. Leprosy.*

(*a*) Faith *special:*

The one leper.
Matt. viii. 1—4; Mark i. 40—45; Luke v. 12—16.

(*b*) Faith *special* and *absolute* contrasted:

The ten lepers.
Luke xvii. 11—19.

2. *Secret.*

Faith perfected in confession.
The woman with the Issue.
Matt. ix. 20—22; Mark v. 25—34; Luke viii. 43—48.

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[2] It is, I think, remarkable that the healing of the blind is exclusively a miracle of the Gospels. There is, as far as I remember, no trace of such cases in the Old Testament or in the Apostolic labours. Promises of the miracle—which is itself, as far as our records guide us, always connected with some symbolic action (Mark viii. 23; Matt. ix. 29; Matt. xx. 34; John ix. 6)—occur in Isaiah xxix. 18; xxxv. 5; xlii. 7 ff. Cf. Psalm cxlvi. 8. In addition to the four cases detailed at length, general notices of the healing of the blind occur: Matt. xi. 4, 5; Luke vii. 28; Matt. xv. 30; xxi. 14. Cf. Matt. xii. 22; Luke xi. 4. The case of St Paul (Acts ix, 17 f.) is exceptional.

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distinguish its character. Two blind men follow Jesus with loud cries for help, not along

(2) *Miracles of Intercession.*

(α) *Organic defects.* (*Simple* Intercession.)

1. The *blind.*
   Mark viii. 22—26.
2. The *dumb and deaf.*
   Mark vii. 31—37.

(β) *Mortal sicknesses.* (Intercession based on *natural ties.*)

1. *Fever.*

   The father for son.
   The Nobleman's son healed.
   John iv. 46, 54.

2. *Paralysis.*

   (a) The master for servant.

   The Centurion's servant healed.
   Matt. viii. 5—13; Luke vii. 1—10.

   (b) The servant for master.

   The Paralytic healed.
   Matt. ix. 1—8; Mark ii. 1—12; Luke v. 17—26.

(3) *Miracles of Love.*

(α) *Organic defect.*

The *blind.*
John ix.

(β) *Disease.*

1. The *fever* healed.

   Matt. viii. 14, 15; Mark i. 29—34; Luke iv. 38—41.

2. The *dropsy* healed.
   Luke xiv. 1—6.

the road only but to the house where He rested. Their faith is then subjected to a special, as before to a general, test. 'Believe ye that I can do this?' And in reply to their unhesitating confession, their faith is made the measure of their reward: 'According to your faith be it done unto you[1].' So SERM. II.

3. The *withered hand* restored.
   Matt. xii. 9—13; Mark iii. 1—5; Luke vi. 6—11.
4. The *impotent man* restored.
   John v. 1—17.

[5. The *woman with a spirit of infirmity set free.*]
   Luke xiii. 10—17.

(γ) *Death.*

1. The death-chamber.
   A girl.
   Matt. ix. 18 ff.; Mark v. 22 ff.; Luke viii. 41 ff.
2. The bier.
   A young man.
   Luke vii. 11—18.
3. The tomb.
   A tried friend.
   John xi.

The consideration of the arrangement thus given will suggest many other groupings according to differences of place and person and character, which will present in ever-increasing clearness the individuality of the miracles. Indeed this individuality can often only be discovered by the careful comparison of one event with several, which it seems at first sight to resemble most closely.

[1] Matt. ix. 27—31.

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again at the last period of our Lord's ministry, as here at the beginning[1], the same cry is once more raised in the same words[2]; but a greater blessing awaited a more triumphant faith. When the followers of Jesus rebuked Bartimæus that he should hold his peace, he cried so much the more, till at last he heard those words of unutterable comfort, 'Thy faith hath saved thee[3].' The others left Jesus, but he followed Him. Theirs was a faith clear, and true, but yet partial: his was complete and self-forgetful. Theirs brought a definite gift: his an abiding companionship.

This difference in the working of faith, which now reaches out to a limited gift, and now embraces a fulness of love unhoped for and unsought, is again seen in those other miracles of faith, where an outward disease

[1] Matt. xx. 29 ff. and parallels.

[2] Matt. ix. 27, *ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, υἱὸς Δαυείδ.* Matt. xx. 30, 31, *Κύριε, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, υἱὸς Δαυείδ.* Cf. Mark x. 47—8; Luke xviii. 38, 39. The form of supplication elsewhere occurs only Matt. xv. 22 (The Syrophœnician woman). Cf. Matt. xxi. 9, 15.

[3] Mark x. 52; Luke xviii. 42, *ἡ πίστις σοῦ σέσωκέν σε.* The phrase elsewhere occurs in the Gospels only: Matt. ix. 22, and parallels (The woman with the issue); Luke xvii. 19 (The Samaritan leper); Luke vii. 50 (The woman in Simon's house).

prefigured most clearly a spiritual malady. The prayers of the lepers[1] like the prayers of the blind meet with unequal rewards, and from the same cause. As Jesus came down from the Mount, on which He had declared the fulfilment of the Law, one met Him 'full of leprosy[2].' Without a thought of ritual restrictions[3], the leper came near and fell at His feet. 'Lord, if thou wilt[4], thou canst make me clean.' This was the sum of his thoughts; and the Saviour's answer responded to his faith on every point. His self-abasement was ennobled by compassion: his advance was welcomed by a healing touch: his very words were used for the message of relief: 'I will, be thou cleansed.'

[1] The healing of leprosy, which is found in the times of the Law (Numb. xii. 10 ff.), and of the Prophets (2 Kings v. 1 ff.), and is mentioned (Matt. x. 8) among the miracles which the Twelve were empowered to perform during their first mission, is not found among the recorded apostolic works.

[2] Luke v. 12.

[3] Ambros. *Comm. in Luc.* l. c. 'Qui legis dominus est non obsequitur legi sed legem facit....Contaminari non poterat qui alios liberabat.'

[4] Cyril of Alexandria has noticed the contrast between the *will* of the Lord and the *prayer* of Moses (Numb. xii. 13): Cram. *Cat. in Luc.* l. c.

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In the other cleansing of lepers recorded in the Gospels, which, like the second healing of the blind, belongs to the last period of our Lord's ministry, the lesson which is shewn here on one side, is brought out in the clearness of a contrast[1]. As Jesus entered into a village ten men met him which stood afar off, and lifted up their voices saying: 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us[2].' The very indefiniteness of the prayer includes an element of doubt, and yet the possibility of a higher blessing. Mercy and not cleansing is the cry of a soul, half-conscious of an unfound source of evil, which 'stands afar off' even in the Saviour's presence. The answer quickened the faith which it proved. No invitation was given to draw near; no touch to strengthen; but only the command to go to the priest to be assured of a cure as yet unwrought. So far all were equal; the faith of all bore this trial, and all were *cleansed.*

[1] Luke xvii. 11—19.

[2] The simple prayer 'ἐλέησον' occurs in the two miracles on the blind already noticed (Matt. ix. 27; Matt. xx. 30 and parallels), in the history of the Syrophœnician woman (Matt. xv. 22), and in that of the lunatic boy (Matt. xvii. 15).

But for one, whom we may suppose to have felt most deeply His former desolate hopelessness, an outcast as much by His race as by His affliction, for one who loved much because He felt in the removal of that outward taint that much was forgiven, cleansing was lost in saving. His self-abasement was raised into faith; His faith was fulfilled in love; and He passed on not with the gift of a sound body simply, but with the consciousness of a new life[1].

Leprosy was an open and acknowledged type of impurity. It was needless for the sufferer to confess his malady: men saw it and shuddered. But it was not with such uncleanness only that Christ had to do. As He was going to the house of a Ruler of the Synagogue—and I would ask you to mark most carefully the strange connexion of the narrative and the dates by which it is signalized[2]—a woman came behind Him in the

[1] Luke xvii. 19, *ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε.* Cf. p. 52, n. 3.

[2] Hilar. *Comm. in Matt.* ix. 18. 'Ita alteri salus, dum alii defertur, est reddita. Cujus fidem et constantiam dominus mox laudavit: quia quod Israeli parabatur, plebs gentium occupavit.'

Hieron. *Comm. in Matt.* ix. 18: 'Nota ergo quod eo tempore hæc mulier, id est, gentium populus cœperit ægrotare quo gens Judæorum

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press and touched the hem of His garment. No one noticed her action: no one was acquainted with her need. Her sorrow and her hope were both sealed within her own heart; and instantly she knew in herself that she was healed of her scourge[1]. That touch of Him, Whom nothing could defile, had done what the waste of all her substance could not do. Her whole wish was fulfilled; but now His eye was following her[2], and she could not be hid. The silent denial was of no avail, and with fear and trembling she 'told all the truth,' not to Jesus only, but before all the people[3]. The secret source of her impurity was at last laid open as well as its accomplished cure. The work of faith was thus completed by confession; and the poor prostrate woman was called Christ's daughter[4], and gladdened with the fulness of that

crediderat.' Ambrose (*Comm. in Luc.* vi. 57) gives a different turn to the explanation.

[1] Mark v. 29, 34 (*μάστιξ*). Elsewhere *μάστιξ* only occurs in general summaries of miracles: Mark iii. 10; Luke vii. 21.

[2] Mark v. 32, *περιεβλέπετο ἰδεῖν τὴν τοῦτο ποιήσασαν.*

[3] Mark. v. 33; Luke viii. 47.

[4] Matt. ix. 22 and parallels [*Θάρσει*], *θύγατερ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε.* This use of *θυγάτερ* occurs nowhere else in the Gospels.

peculiar blessing pronounced elsewhere only upon the penitent in the house of Simon: 'go in peace (εἰς εἰρήνην): thy faith hath saved thee[1].'

ii. In this way personal faith is rewarded, quickened, raised in living acts of blessing. The lowest and most concrete form in which it is manifested, has its proper answer. And elsewhere new thoughts are revealed in the heart of the restored sufferer. The consciousness of a power present to heal, leads him from the outward to the inward, from the accident to the essence, till it issues in the perfected type of healing, in companionship, and peace, and adoption. Nor is it otherwise with the faith of intercession. Here also prayer works far more than it consciously seeks. It works and reworks. It aims at a healing of the body, and receives a healing of the soul: it entreats a blessing for another, and receives a blessing for itself.

Sometimes the relation of the intercessor to the sufferer is left unmarked. He brings the blind or deaf to Jesus, and asks His

[1] Mark v. 34; Luke viii. 48. Cf. Luke vii. 50.

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help, and no more is told us[1]. Nor can it be without meaning that exactly in these cases Christ effects the cure with the most outward preparation, leading the man out of the crowd and village[2], using the most apparent means[3], marking the effort of the act by the inward groan[4], and showing its progress in the growing clearness of the restored sight[5]. The faith of others—a faith general rather than special—is here made the starting-point of a personal faith; and this fresh faith is tenderly cherished by symbolic deeds and words, till it can conceive the gift which is sought.

At other times the natural position of the suppliant indicates the efficiency of his intercession. A father beseeches Jesus for his son: a master for his servant: and servants with untiring zeal bring their master before the Saviour's presence[6]. Not one relation of

[1] Matt. viii. 22—26; Mark vii. 31—37.

[2] Mark vii. 33, *ἀπολαβόμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου*: viii. 23, *ἐξήνεγκεν ἔξω τῆς κώμης*.

[3] Mark vii. 33; viii. 23.

[4] Mark vii. 34, *ἐστέναξεν*.

[5] Mark viii. 23—25.

[6] John iv. 46 ff.; Matt. viii. 5 ff.; Matt. ix. 1 ff.

life, but all, give birth to a love which can work wonders. And is it nothing more than a trait of nature that we see a father's solicitude wrestling with and almost conquering his faith, while the centurion by his deep humility wins for himself a name for faith beyond any in Israel[1]? Is it nothing that the palsied man 'borne of four,' received a remission of sins 'when Jesus saw their faith[2],' which distinguishes his cure from all other miracles? or rather is it not a type of the working of Christianity itself, when by the ministry of the poor and simple new life was infused into a dying world?

iii. But the gracious acts of Christ were not limited to answers to men's prayers for others or for themselves. He worked—and it is well for men that He still works—at other times than when He is moved by faith and intercession. His miracles of mercy foreshow Him to us as One Who gives more than we can desire. In scenes and maladies the

[1] Compare John iv. 48, 49 with Luke vii. 6, 9.

[2] Matt. ix. 2, *ἰδὼν τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν*. Ambr. *Comm in Luc.* l. c. 'Cur apud te homo collega non valeat, cum apud Dominum servus et interveniendi meritum et jus habeat impetrandi?'

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most varied, He stood forth as the great Healer, even of those for whom no aid was sought[1]. In the house of a known friend[2], or among secret enemies[3], in the synagogue[4], on the wayside[5], by the crowded pool[6], He removed the fever and the dropsy, gave strength to the withered hand, sight to the closed eye, vigour to the enervated powers. In one respect only all these miracles were alike: they were miracles of the Sabbath[7]. They were emphatically the beginnings of a new order[8]: the triumph of love over ritual: the signs of a Royal Lawgiver. In some cases, indeed, it is possible to see the fitness of the act from its first consequences. The mother of Peter arose and ministered to Him who had raised her[9]: the impotent man is next found in the temple[10]: the man blind

[1] For the summary of these miracles, see p. 48, n. 1.

[2] Matt. viii. 14. [3] Luke xiv. 1.

[4] Matt. xii. 9, 10. [5] John ix. 1. [6] John v. 3.

[7] Mark i. 29; Luke xiv. 1; Mark iii. 2; John ix. 14; John v. 9.

[8] Cf. Ambros. *Comm. in Luc.* iv. § 58. 'Sabbato medicinæ Dominicæ opera cœpta significat, ut inde nova creatura cœperit, ubi vetus ante desivit; nec sub Lege esse Dei Filium sed supra Legem in ipso principio designaret, nec solvi Legem sed impleri.'

[9] Matt. viii. 15. [10] John v. 14.

from his birth confesses Christ with a boldness and devotion, perhaps without parallel[1]. But twice it seems as if the work of healing were rather a lesson than a gift. The thoughts of men were laid bare by the questions which they could not answer, and to which they yet refused to yield[2]. The blessing which violated their prejudices, is, as it has ever been, the signal for conspiracy[3], and Christ Himself 'looked round upon them with anger, grieved at the hardness of their hearts[4].'

So far we have seen Christ meeting and conquering with words of power and love those lower forms of evil, with which men also

[1] John ix. 35 ff. The self-revelation (ver. 37, ὁ λαλῶν μετὰ σοῦ ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν) to the outcast from the synagogue finds its only parallel in the similar revelation (John iv. 26, ἐγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι) to the outcast from the nation.

[2] Matt. xii. 10 ff. and parallels (in the synagogue). Luke xiv. 1 ff. (in the Pharisee's house).

[3] Matt. xii. 14; Mark iii. 6.

[4] Mark iii. 5. There are other miracles of the Sabbath: Mark i. 21 ff. Luke iv. 31—37, *An unclean spirit cast out;* and Luke xiii. 10 ff., *The healing of the woman with a spirit of infirmity;* of which the latter probably belongs to this class, though it forms at the same time a link between the miracles on man and the miracles on the spiritual world. The touch and words of healing (v. 12, ἀπολέλυσαι τῆς ἀσθενείας) distinguish the miracle from the 'casting out' of evil spirits, while the distinct reference to the power of Satan (v. 16) separates it in some measure from the ordinary miracles of healing.

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struggle not always without success; but He did not rest within these limits. Not 'in this world only' was the hope which He came to establish. Step by step He led His disciples by works of increasing glory to realize the mystery of His Resurrection, and to anticipate their own. The death-chamber, the bier, the grave, bore witness to one truth. Death itself,—death the end of sin as disease is its symptom,—found a conqueror. When all hope was past, the highest expectation of hope was fulfilled, almost in spite of men. They said 'The damsel is dead: trouble not the master:' yet Jesus went on[1]. The young man was being carried to the tomb and not to a Saviour[2]. Even Mary could only say, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died[3]'. Yet in the poor distraction of idle mourning, in the desolate

[1] Luke viii. 49. Cf. Mark v. 35.

[2] Luke vii. 12.

[3] John xi. 32, Κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὧδε, οὐκ ἄν μου ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός. There is a shade of difference between these words and the corresponding words of Martha (v. 21), Κύριε εἰ ἦς ὧδε, οὐκ ἂν ὁ ἀδελφός μου ἀπέθανεν, which seems characteristic, even if ἐτεθνήκει in the latter case cannot be maintained against the great consent of the best MSS.

loneliness of bereavement, in the bitterness of a sorrow doubled by the feeling of help too late deferred, a voice proclaimed to the world the truth for which it had waited long, of which the wise had seen fair visions and dreamed noble dreams, the truth which stamps all human joy with immortality: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live[1].'

In these words lie the secret of all miracles of healing. This is the clear expression of that which they foreshow and seal. One short sentence is enough to contain the whole Gospel. Christ, as He stands by the grave of one whom 'He loved,' is the sign of the restoration of humanity; and His words teach us the means. Not by any magical effluence, not by any arbitrary will, but by inward union with Him who not only *has* life, but *is* life, the ills of men are removed. The hand

[1] John. xi. 25. *The healing of Malchus,* which is mentioned by St Luke (xxii. 51), while the other evangelists only speak of his wound, seems to lie without the true cycle of the Evangelic miracles. In this Christ is seen to meet and remedy the evils which are wrought among men by the false zeal of his own followers.

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stretched out to touch or raise was but the apt symbol of a deeper union in that vital energy by which all cures were wrought. When many *thronged* Christ, one only *touched* Him[1]. And that contact, the contact of the soul which feels its want with Him Who is waiting to relieve it, is within our reach. Faith is still the measure of blessing, as when the Centurion found in the witness of his heart the certainty of an answered prayer. The past is not past only, for it was the revelation of the eternal. The miracles were wrought for *us:* the record was written for *us:* for *us*—and yet we live on from day to day, as if we were not heirs of blessings already realized, as if we were not cheered by the assurance of yet greater works[2]. I do not stop to inquire how far the *form* of miracles may change, as the world itself changes, but as far as miracles are flashes of a heavenly life and power bursting through

[1] Mark v. 31. Vict. Ant. *ap.* Cram. *Cat. in loc.*, ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν Σωτῆρα ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ· ὁ δὲ ἀπιστῶν θλίβει αὐτὸν καὶ λυπεῖ. So Ambros. *Comm. in Luc.* vi. 57, 'Non enim credunt qui comprimunt: credunt qui tangunt.'

[2] John xiv. 12.

the thin veil of natural life, as far as they are revelations of the invisible, Epiphanies of the divine, they belong to all times. We may not, we dare not, abjure the heritage of the Holy Spirit; and if we put it away, it will be to our confusion. It is faithlessness alone, *our* faithlessness, which closes the period of miracles. The divine 'election of ages,' as of men or races, is consistent with a universal redemption, and a promise of help without limit. Heaven lies about us still, though we will not look beyond the clouds which hide it. Christ is still the same, the Word, the Light, the Life, to each one of us, and to the masses of which we commonly think only with cold hopelessness. The thought is one which we need to cherish for the fulfilment of our outer and our inner work. As we start up to the consciousness of the evil within ourselves or in the great world around us, the instant excitement of alarm is often followed by something at first of impatience and then of despair. Yet the miracles of healing which we have reviewed to-day, are charged with a message of infinite comfort. The hindrance

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which checks our labours lies not in Christ but in us: not in the greatness of our distresses, but in the faintness of our aspirations. Those miracles speak to us of what men have done and gained in Christ, Whose help outran their trust; of what men can do, for the promise is unrecalled, even if it is unused. They speak to us of a power of faith which opens the eyes of the blind, and removes the stains of the impure. They speak to us of a power of prayer, which gives utterance to the stammering tongue and strength to the palsied limbs. They speak to us of a power of love which transcends all known laws and spoils the grave of its victim.

They speak to us also, and it is well that we should remember this, of deep groanings and many tears, of dangers, of conflict, of sacrifice, by which the deliverance from sin and the curse of sin is wrought. Yet the voice of eighteen centuries tells us of a joy above all suffering in the devotion of Christian labour, of a strength above all peril in the vigour of Christian warfare. And if the conflict has grown harder, the fault is all our

own. We have all that saints of old had to support them in their struggle; and we have more, in the records of their triumph. Faith is still the inmost soul of the life of man, the inspirer of noblest thoughts, the author of heroic deeds, to which as aforetime all things are possible. Prayer loses no strength in the course of ages, but grows more prevailing with each gift it brings. The love of Christ *can* know no change. The same powers which conquered sicknesses and death are now not less mighty to overcome their spiritual antitypes, 'the blindness of sensuality and the leprosy of caste', the fever of restlessness, the palsy of indolence, the death of sin. I say nothing of outward victories which the Christian can gain, and has gained in our own country and in our own age, for the Gospels teach us to look beyond them. But whether it be in acts of limited philanthropy or in the labour of spiritual love, whether it be in doing or in suffering, the faith which is the spring of our conduct will be also the measure of our success. And may God grant that when we go forth, each to the proper task

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which He assigns to us, to combat evil after the example and in the strength of Christ, we may hear His words: 'As thou hast believed so be it done unto you,' not as the tidings of an imperfect blessing, but as the reward of faith made perfect in humility.

Third Sunday after Epiphany, 1859.

SERMON III.

MIRACLES ON THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

St Matthew VIII. 29.

And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

The narrative which is contained in the Gospel of to-day presents a startling epitome of the battle between good and evil on the stage of human life. It is no longer, as in the Temptation, the personal conflict of the Saviour and the Adversary, but the conflict of the Saviour with the power of evil dominant in men. The end is not to drive *back* but to drive *out*, not to conquer only, but to spoil, the great Enemy. The character of the conflict corresponds with the increased complexity of the conditions which it involves. The contest is marked by suffering

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and loss; and the victory itself is received but with a partial welcome. The poor victim of the terrible possession—the dweller in tombs and mountains, the savage and unreclaimable enemy of his fellows—is seen clothed and in his right mind at the feet of Jesus, while those who had suffered a material loss from the Saviour's work prayed Him that He would depart from among them, because they were taken with great fear[1]. The one in the consciousness of a restored being, entreats that he may still follow the author of his blessing: the others in the anticipation of greater sacrifices, seek still to retain for a while that which could not abide the ordeal of the divine presence[2]. The one petition is refused, the other granted; yet so that what seems in both cases the withdrawal of a blessing, is really the counsel of tenderest love. The Saviour departs, but the witness of His love remains. The greater blessing is replaced by one which was less overpowering. It might be that these who could not hear as yet the immediate teaching of Christ, would listen

[1] Luke viii. 35, 37. [2] Mark v. 18, 19.

willingly to the tidings which another gave of His deeds of mercy and power; and thus we are told in fact that when the restored demoniac proclaimed how great things Jesus had done for him throughout the region of Decapolis, all men marvelled[1]. SERM. III.

The conflict and contrast which lies thus upon the surface of the history penetrate every part of it. The noblest love and the meanest selfishness: the most confiding devotion and the most abject terror: the most simple attention and the most reckless frenzy are combined in one changing picture. Man is seen united by spiritual powers at once with the highest and lowest natures. Now he draws near to the one, now to the other, trembling and yet praying; while the Saviour by act and word seeks to rouse his true and noblest being, and whether He grants or denies, equally defeats the kingdom of evil and furthers the kingdom of God[2]. But it is not in this isolated aspect that we have to regard this miracle to-day, however rich it may be in lessons of humility and hope,

[1] Mark v. 20. [2] Matt. viii. 32; Mark v. 19.

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revealing at once the terrible degradation of which humanity is capable and the infinite compassion with which Jesus raises the most afflicted to the work of an Evangelist[1], but rather as one of those open miracles on the spirit-world which are in many respects the most startling and the most characteristic part of our Lord's ministry: the most startling, for they reveal an actual communion of man with spirits, which however accordant with common instinct is yet in fact most inconceivable: the most characteristic, for in the records of revelation the demoniac cures belong only to the period of the Gospel[2].

It does not fall within our present scope to examine at any length the reality of the nature of 'possession.' The existence of such a phenomenon, by which a strange spiritual

[1] Mark v. 19.

[2] The miracles on demoniacs recorded in the Gospels will be noticed below (p. 83, n. 1). Similar miracles are narrated likewise in the Acts though the words *δαιμονίζεσθαι* and *δαιμόνιον* do not occur in that book in this connexion. Cf. Acts v. 16, *πνεύματα ἀκάθαρτα* (St Peter at Jerusalem); viii. 7, *πνεύμ. ἀκάθ.* (Philip at Samaria); xvi. 16, *πνεῦμα Πύθωνα* (St. Paul at Philippi); xix. 12, *τὰ πν. τὰ πονηρά* (St Paul at Ephesus). Compare also Eph. ii. 2; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 1 John iv. 6; Apoc. xvi. 13 (xviii. 2), *πνεύμ. ἀκάθ. id.* xvi. 14, *πνεύμ. δαιμονίων.*

power usurps a dominion over the bodily organization of men, is stated so unequivocally by the Evangelists, that no supposition consistent with their veracity can explain it away[1]. It is not only that they adopt the language of their age and country in a simple description of common occurrences, but the belief is inwrought into the whole fabric of their history. There is no room for accommodation except by the sacrifice of truth; for the question is not one of indifference nor of natural knowledge, but touches nearly on our spiritual life. Reasoning as well as narrative bears witness

[1] The various phrases which express the idea 'possession' in the New Testament, and at the same time serve to bring out some of its characteristics, are

(α) δαιμονίζεσθαι occ. St Matt. and St Mark frequent: Luke viii. 36; John x. 21 [Joseph. *Ant.* VIII. 25] (*dæmonium habere*, Vulg.) Cf. δαιμονᾶν.

(β) ἔχειν πνεῦμα δαιμ. ἀκαθάρτου, Luke iv. 33—δαιμόνιον ἔχειν, Matt. xi. 18; Luke vii. 33; John vii. 20; viii. 48 ff.; x. 20, δαιμόνιον ἔχει καὶ μαίνεται—δαιμόνια ἔχειν, Luke viii. 27 (*dæmonium habere*, Vulg.)—ἔχειν πν. ἀκάθαρτον, Acts viii. 7; Mark iii. 30; vii. 25.

(γ) ἄνθρωπος ἐν πν. ἀκαθάρτῳ, Mark i. 23; v. 2 (*in spiritu immundo*, Vulg.).

(δ) ἐνοχλεῖσθαι (*alii* ὀχλεῖσθαι) ἀπὸ πν. ἀκαθαρτῶν, Luke vi. 18 (*vexari a sp. immundis*, Vulg.). Cf. Luke viii. 29, ἐλαύνεσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ δαιμονίου εἰς τὰς ἐρήμους.

Cf. p. 72, n. 2. On the other hand the general term for removing the affliction is ἐκβάλλειν τὸ δαιμ. (*ejicere*, Vulg.).

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to the same doctrine. The fact of possession, according to the Gospels, furnished our Lord with the occasion for an argument and a lesson. The powers of evil are likened by Him to a kingdom, of which the members differ in strength and malignity[1]; and the intensity of human effort which is the condition of their defeat is said to vary with their special character[2]. Hatred to God and man furnishes a bond for common action to that which is essentially anarchy and confusion; and a knowledge which transcends all natural insight, for the devils knew Christ when He was yet unrevealed[3], guides the armies of one who is called the Prince of this world[4]. The conception of such an array of spiritual adversaries, is in itself terrible and alarming, and yet it seems to be a necessary correlative of that glorious prospect of the Hosts of heaven which is opened to us in the Scriptures. If it increases the solemnity of life, it also raises its dignity. Man is seen

[1] Luke xi. 17 ff. [2] Mark ix. 29.

[3] Cf. Mark i. 34; iii. 12; Luke iv. 41. Cf. Acts xvi. 17, 18.

[4] John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11. Cf. Matt. ix. 34. Eph. vi. 12, *κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τούτου*—Κοσμοκράτωρ ℵ, Παντοκράτωρ.

to be placed, as it were, on the border land of two hostile empires. Spirits of light and darkness hover round him, with messages of hope and solicitations of despair. On every side he is bound to the unseen and the eternal, now guided by the ministry of angels, now himself debased into the instrument or victim of Satan.

How it came to pass that in any particular case Satan gained a special entrance into a man's being, how it is that the victim is in one case 'possessed' by 'seven devils,' and in another by a 'legion[1],' how it is that a deliverance though complete is not always permanent[2], how it is that the invading power controls the organs of the man, while yet his individual consciousness is not extinguished[3], we cannot tell. On all these points Scripture is silent, and it may be that they involve principles which wholly fall beyond our present knowledge. But while Scripture is silent as to the origin and essence of possession, it reveals in distinct instances the variety of its

[1] Luke viii. 2; Mark v. 9.

[2] Luke xi. 24 ff.

[3] Cf. Matt. viii. 9, 10.

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effects. Now they are found in organic obstructions: now in wild paroxysms or habitual frenzy. No new phenomena are manifested, but old phenomena are referred to new sources. Speaking generally it might be said that disorders of the nervous system would account for the various symptoms assigned in the Gospels to possession; but those who have thought most deeply on the subject will confess how far we are from discovering the cause of the malady when we have determined its seat. The same outward affections are referred by the Evangelists to different causes; and though it is wholly uncertain by what common characteristics the cases of possession were distinguished, it is enough for us to know that they cannot be identified with any one natural form of disease from the variety of their external results, while, on the other hand, when men saw the sufferer, they pronounced at once on the source of his affliction[1].

[1] The following instances will shew the marked variety of maladies attributed to 'possession.'

(α) *Dumbness.* Matt. ix. 32—34. Cf. Mark ix. 25.

(β) *Blindness and Dumbness.* Matt. xii. 22 ff.

(γ) *Epilepsy.* Matt. xvii. 14 ff and parallels.

Historically speaking, possession was, in a peculiar sense, a characteristic of the first age. In addition to the testimony of the Gospels, Josephus alludes to its occurrence as frequent and well-known, and quotes an instance of successful exorcism which he himself witnessed in the presence of Vespasian[1]. But though possession does not appear in earlier history, it seems to have still lingered in some marked shape during the first three centuries. The great apologists appeal to the power of Christians in such cases, without reserve or doubt, as signal and notorious[2]. While heathenism

(δ) *Madness.* Mark v. 4.

(ε) *Melancholy.* Matt. xi. 18.

Compare also Luke xiii. 11, 16 (*πνεῦμα ἀσθενείας*).

[1] Joseph. *Ant.* VIII. 2, 5. Cf. *B. J.* VII. 6, 3. It is impossible not to contrast the superstitious materialism of Josephus with the simplicity of the Gospel narratives, both as to the language which describes the affliction and the cure: [*δαιμόνια*] *ταῦτα δὲ πονηρῶν ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπων πνεύματα, τοῖς ζῶσιν εἰσδύσμενα καὶ κτείνοντα*.....Cf. *Ant.* VI. 8. 2; II. 3. The anachronism which refers the charms and exorcisms to Solomon (*Ant.* VIII. 2, 5), and transfers the language of a later time to the affliction of Saul (*Ant.* VI. 11, 3), is equally characteristic of Josephus.

[2] The passages in Justin (*Apol.* II. 6; *Dial.* § 30), Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.* II. 31, 2; 32, 4), and Origen (*c. Cels.* VII. p. 334, ed. Spenc.), are as explicit as possible. The words of Tertullian are well known and very striking: 'Edatur hic aliquis sub tribunalibus vestris, quem dæmone agi constet. Jussus a quolibet Christiano loqui

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was yet dominant, the promise of Christ was fulfilled in the power of His name. Afterwards this form of evil appears to have passed away from a world professedly Christian. The grossest manifestation of the power of Satan was repressed by the confession of a public faith; just as, in earlier times, the Evangelists mention no instance of possession at Jerusalem which was hallowed by the visible Temple of God.

It might, perhaps, be possible to raise the question whether 'possession,' in the widest sense of the term, may not still exist in some modified shape and within particular limits; but as a common and marked malady it has ceased to appear. In this respect it presents a striking analogy to those many marvellous plagues, which, after they have agitated a whole generation, seem like a fable to the next. In its outward characteristics the Evangelic 'possession' was not more startling than

spiritus ille, tam se dæmonem confitebitur de vero quam alibi deum de falso' (*Apol.* 23). It is very worthy of notice that the special order of Exorcists seems to have been established when the characteristic form of the malady and its miraculous antidote passed away. Cf. Bingham, *Orig.* III. 4, 1 ff.

some of the well-known epidemics of the middle ages, or even than forms of what may be called contagious frenzy in much later times. On a wide view of the life of mankind it seems as if such afflictions spring out of the moral condition of the times in which they occur, and exhibit in visible shapes the struggles which are going on within. At present it is unsafe to theorize on the different laws which bind together the different parts of our nature. But enough is known to show that further inquiry will not be barren; nor is it possible to conceive a more instructive page in history than that which shall lay open the intimate relation which obtains not only between man and the outer world[1], but between the inner life of a people and their physical state, and show, as it surely will show at some time, the prevailing thoughts and tempers of men reflected in types of disease prevalent among them.

In this aspect it may seem not wholly un-

[1] This great truth, which places in the clearest light the unity of all creation, is distinctly pointed out in the combination of signs which are connected with 'the coming of our Lord' (Matt. xxiv. Luke xxi.); and historians the most free from any tendency to mysticism (*e. g.* Niebuhr) have recognized its realization in crises of human existence.

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intelligible that possession was a mark of the period of the new birth of the world. I spoke last Sunday of the wide-spread outward distress which existed under the early Roman Empire, of the desolation which was called peace, and of the despotism which left freedom only as a subject for declaimers. The spiritual distress of the time was not less real nor less felt. The faith in the old religions was dead, and nothing was as yet found to take their place. The Jew emulated the philosophy of the Greek; the Roman sought repose in the teaching of the East. On all sides the religious and the thoughtful rushed into wild orgies to assert the vigour of life which they felt to be failing, or took refuge in strange mysteries in the hope of unriddling the secrets which wearied them. The fences of spiritual life were, as a general rule, broken down, and men lay exposed in a peculiar manner to the assaults of those powers of evil whose mightiest energies culminated in the æra of the Incarnation. The extreme necessities of man coincided with the highest manifestation of the love of God. In the fulness of time the king-

dom of Satan was openly displayed that it might be openly conquered. Then, and not till then, there was, if I may so speak, a clear revelation of evil, because men were able to support it in the strength of the Son of God. The Tempter was seen in the fulness of his worldly dominion at the moment when he was met and vanquished[1]. The spiritual armies of darkness were disclosed in their manifold workings as soon as a name was given among men able to defeat their efforts. In this way the miracles on the spirit-world complete the public signs of Christ's ministry. An Epiphany of judgment follows the Epiphanies of power and love. He Whom we first saw as the mighty Lord, and then as the merciful Saviour, now appears to us as the Holy One of God[2].

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[1] It is, I think, of great importance to remember that this revelation of the powers of darkness is a special doctrine of the New Testament. The revelations of Satan in the Old Testament possess a remarkable typical value, advancing in a triple progress (Job i. 6—12; Zech. iii. 1—5; 1 Chron. xxi. 1), but the Temptation is their first fulfilment, while it presents the power of evil active on earth, and claiming to establish his kingdom in opposition to the kingdom of God.

[2] Mark i. 24; Luke iv. 34, ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ Θεοῦ. It is a suggestive fact that this premature declaration of the evil spirit coincides with

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In one respect the miracles on spirits differ characteristically from the miracles of healing, to which they are most nearly allied. The latter were, as we saw last Sunday, in equal proportion, works of prayer and intercession and love. But the dæmoniac utters no personal prayer; or rather the prayer which he utters is not his; for his whole frame is subject to the tyranny of another. His true power of action is so entirely suspended, that he either resists the cure, or simply submits to it passively. For him intercession and love alone can originate a deliverance from an overpowering burden. These powers, however, are sufficient; and so far as the dæmoniac cures exhibit the working of faith and mercy, they present a remarkable parallel to the miracles of healing. But they do more than this. They are signs not only of Christ's work, but of Christ's character. They are tests not only of the faith of those who seek the blessing, but also of those who witness it.

the confession of St Peter (John vi. 69: according to the best MSS.) when he expresses the common faith of the apostles as distinguished from his fuller personal confession: Matt. xvi. 16 compared with John xi. 27.

Men see them, and their own spiritual state is reflected in the opinion which they form of them; and in this widest sense also they are miracles of judgment[1].

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[1] The miracles on dæmoniacs recorded in the Gospels fall into the following groups:

(*a*) *Miracles of intercession.*

1. *Simple* intercession.

(*a*) A *dumb* man possessed by a devil:
Matt. ix. 32—34.

(*β*) A *blind and dumb* man possessed by a devil:
Matt. xii. 22 ff. Cf. Luke xi. 14 ff.

2. Intercession based on *natural ties.*

(*a*) The Syrophœnician's daughter healed:
Matt. xv. 21—28; Mark vii. 24—30.

(*β*) The lunatic boy healed:
Matt. xvii. 14 ff.; Mark ix. 14 ff.; Luke ix. 37 ff.

(*b*) *Miracles of antagonism.*

(*a*) In the *Synagogue.*

The unclean spirit cast out:
Mark i. 21—28; Luke iv. 31—37.

(*β*) In the *Tombs.*

The legion cast out.
Matt. viii. 28—34; Mark v. 1—17; Luke viii. 26—37.

The healing of the woman with *a spirit of infirmity* (Luke xiii. 10—17) has been noticed already, p. 61, n. 4. General references to dæmoniac cures occur, Matt. iv. 24; viii. 16 || Mark i. 32; Luke iv. 41; Mark i. 39. Cf. Matt. vii. 22; x. 8 || Mark iii. 15; Luke ix. 1 (of the Twelve); Luke x. 17 (of the Seventy); Mark ix. 38 || Luke ix. 49. [Mark] xvi. 17. Compare p. 72, n. 2.

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This characteristic of the dæmoniac cures is brought out distinctly in those cases which answer to the simplest intercession[1] in the miracles of healing. The same sign is variously interpreted according to the temper of the witnesses: to some it is proof of a peculiar presence of God; to others, an occasion for wilful blasphemy. They brought a dumb man to Christ[2], and when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake, and the multitudes marvelled, saying: It was never so seen in Israel[3]. But the Pharisees said: 'He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils[4].' And again when, at no long interval, another was brought to Jesus blind and dumb[5], and healed by Him, all the multitude were amazed, and said: 'Is not this the Son of David?' But

[1] Cf. pp. 57 f.

[2] Matt. ix. 32—34.

[3] Hil. *Comm. in Matt.* l. c. '...Cui per legem nihil afferri opis potuerat verbi virtute [salvatur].'

[4] Hieron. *Comm. in Matt.* ix. 33. 'In turba confessio nationum est: Pharisæi....per suam calumniam usque hodie Judæorum infidelitatem [demonstrant].'

[5] Matt. xii. 22 ff. Hilar. *Comm.* ad loc. 'Oportebat igitur ut post hæc in unius hujus forma salus gentium fieret, ut qui erat habitatio dæmonis et cæcus et mutus, Deo capax pararetur, et Deum contueretur in Christo, et Christi opera Dei confessione laudaret.'

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the Pharisees when they heard it said: 'This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub.' The lesson of the one miracle is carried out and completed by the other. In each particular there is an obvious advance in the second narrative. The affliction of the sufferer is greater, for blindness is added to dumbness. The wonder of the multitudes is raised to amazement[1]. The vague comparison with the works of former time is defined in the surmise that Messiah[2] was indeed come. And the answer of the Pharisees is expressed in terms of personal bitterness[3], which brings down upon them that fearful word, in which it is said that there is a sin which shall not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in the age to come[4]. The Lord works, and as He works the hearts of men are laid bare. The spiritual miracle is not intelligible but to the spiritually minded; just

[1] Matt. ix. 33, *ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι.* Matt. xii. 23, *ἐξίσταντο πάντες οἱ ὄχλοι.*

[2] Matt. xii. 23, *ὁ υἱὸς Δαυείδ.* Cf. p. 52, n. 2.

[3] Matt. xii. 24, *οὗτος οὐκ ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ Βελζεβοὺλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων.*

[4] Matt. xii. 31, 32.

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as the articulate voice of God seemed to the faithless as a thunder-clap[1].

In the second form of intercession, to follow the same arrangement as before, where natural relationship prompts and strengthens the petition, the dæmoniac cures do not present as great variety as the miracles of healing[2]. There we saw the master interceding for the servant, the servants for their master, the father for his son; but here the intercession springs only from the last and closest tie. How far this circumstance itself may convey a lesson of duties multiplied by nearness, of an intensity of spiritual sympathy which should hallow the inmost recesses of the family, I will not inquire; but that at least cannot be without a meaning, that as the centurion received the noblest witness to his triumphant faith, the Syrophœnician woman heard those

[1] John xii. 29. The same sounds appear to different men as the articulate testimony of God—the voice of an angel—mere thunder. Even now the words are verified daily. Cf. pp. 120 f.

In both these miracles Hilary sees the type of the healing of the Gentiles: 'Dei quippe cognitione superstitionum vesania effugata, et visus et auditus et sermo salutis invehitur.'—Hil. *Comm. in Matt.* x. 32.

[2] Cf. p. 58.

words of great comfort, 'O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt[1].' In spiritual, as in bodily blessings, the last became first. Here as there the Saviour's mercy outran His promise. His will anticipated His word; and, as He spoke, the devil was already gone out from the daughter of the believing Gentile[2].

The parallel between the two corresponding groups of miracles may be carried yet farther. The healing of the lunatic boy when compared with that of the Syrophœnician's daughter offers in a higher form a similar contrast in the development of faith to that which has been already noticed in the miracles of the nobleman and the centurion. Jesus raises the one suppliant to the most self-denying

[1] Matt. xv. 28, Ὦ γύναι, μεγάλη σου ἡ πίστις· γενηθήτω σοι ὡς θέλεις. Cf. Matt. viii. 10. No such address occurs elsewhere.

[2] Mark vii. 29, ἐξελήλυθεν. Hieron. *Comm. in Matt.* xv. 26 ff. 'Mira sub persona mulieris Chananitidis Ecclesiæ fides patientia et humilitas prædicatur....O mira rerum conversio! Israel quondam filius, nos canes.' All that he says is worthy of study. Cf. Hilar. *Comm. in Matt.* xv. § 3. '....merito hæc Chananæa proselytorum formam præferens existimabitur, fines suos egressa, ex gentibus scilicet in populi alterius nomen excedens, quæ pro filia, videlicet gentium plebe, orat; et quia Dominum cognovit ex lege, David filium nuncupat.' Cf. Aug. *Quæst. Ev.* I. § 18.

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devotion by apparent neglect, and strengthens the other to a confession of absolute dependence by ready sympathy. The faith which before was blessed in the refusal of help offered beyond what was needful, is now blessed in the acceptance of that which seemed like a stern refusal of help. The doubt which before was checked by the assurance of a cure accomplished at a distance, is now met by a present display of merciful power[1]. But apart from these mutual relations of the different narratives, I would rather notice that in these cases also the dæmoniac cures are in another sense miracles of judgment. In the first instances the conflicting thoughts of the people were revealed in the contemplation of the issue of the miracles. In these the thoughts of the disciples are revealed in the working of them. At the one time they said, wearied with the suppliant's importunity, 'Send her away, for she crieth after us.' In the other, baffled by the evil which they had sought to remove, they were constrained

[1] Compare John iv. 50, *πορεύου· ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ*, with Mark ix. 19, *φέρετε αὐτὸν πρὸς μέ*.

to ask, 'Why could not we cast him out?' When tried by the standard of Christ, they were found to mistake both the motive and the means which lead to miracles. The works which they would have wrought without any regard to the state of the intercessor, or of themselves, were wrought at last, not to avoid the wearisome solicitations of a sufferer, but as a result of the closest sympathy with her spiritual nature: not by a simple word of power, but as a result of personal self-denial and effort[1]. SERM. III.

The last form of the spiritual miracles presents their peculiar characteristics in the most striking light. In the miracles of healing, it was seen that the spontaneous working of love often brought the blessing which was unsought by personal prayer or intercession. In the miracles on dæmoniacs this working of love is replaced by another and yet a cognate exhibition of the Divine Nature. An absolute antagonism with evil is co-ordinate with a boundless compassion for the sufferer. The dæmoniac cures were miracles of judg-

[1] Mark ix. 29.

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ment, not only in their effects and in their working, but also in their essential nature. In these the powers of good and evil stood opposed in open and direct conflict. The presence of Christ was then outwardly, as it ever is really, the touchstone of evil. If others doubted, the devils at least believed, and trembled. In His first public address in the synagogue at Capernaum, and among the tombs of Gergesa, the same cry met Him, summed up in the fear, now of destruction, and now of torment: 'What have we to do with thee[1]?' Before Him the spirit of evil could not lie hid or silent, whether it occupied the person of the worshipper or of the maniac[2]. To Him all was

[1] Mark i. 24, *τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί...; ἦλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς; Id.* v. 7, *τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί; ...μή με βασανίσῃς.* Elsewhere, John ii. 4.

Hieron. *Comm. in Matt.* viii. 30. 'Non voluntatis ista confessio est quam præmium sequitur confitentis, sed necessitatis extorsio quæ cogit invitos, velut si servi fugitivi post multum temporis dominum suum videant, nihil aliud nisi de verberibus deprecantur.... Præsentia salvatoris tormenta sunt dæmonum.'

[2] Compare Mark i. 23, *ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ*, with Mark v. 3, *ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν.*

Ambros. *Comm. in Luc.* iv. § 61. 'Quis est ille qui in Synagoga spiritum dæmonii habebat immundum, nisi populus Judæorum...'. *Id.* vi. § 44. 'Vir qui habebat dæmonium populi figura gentilis est, opertus vitiis, nudus errori, patens crimini.'

Both Hilary (*Comm. in Matt.* viii. § 4) and Ambrose (*Comm. in Luc.* vi. § 44) see a typical meaning in the *two* dæmoniacs as repre-

open and confessed. He refused the witness of the spirits, and checked it by the same word with which he quelled the tempest[1]. He granted their prayer only to their ruin; and the very terrors of the great day are shadowed forth in miracles which form an Epiphany of Judgment, as evil is destroyed from before the face of the Holy One.

With these scenes of sovereign righteousness the whole cycle of the Gospel-miracles is completed. The limits within which they are confined, seem, upon a retrospect, to be narrow, and yet their bearings are as wide as the extent of revelation. Step by step we have been led to regard the entire range of the Divine working, as far as it affects man, in acts of creation, of redemption, of judgment. The records of the public ministry of Christ present in this aspect an epitome of the history of the world in its highest relations, in which the great facts involved in its very existence are reconnected with the action of

senting the descendants of two of the sons of Noah contrasted with the descendants of Shem.

[1] Mark i. 25, *φιμώθητι*. *Id.* iv. 39, *πεφίμωσο*.

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the Word. There are other points of view in which the miracles may be regarded, but this seems to be that which sets forward most clearly their permanent significance. Even from this point of view it would be possible to group them in other ways, or to bring out more clearly lessons which I have been able only to indicate; for in many respects the rapid survey which I have made is necessarily imperfect. Difficulties have been left unanswered: coincidences have been left undeveloped. No more than a sketch has been made of that which may be filled up in every detail. But it is enough if what has been said is sufficient to excite inquiry; for all true knowledge comes from personal labour: all true conviction from personal study; and it is as impossible to transfer a vital belief as it is to enter into the secrets of another's soul. Yet, unless I am mistaken, the rough outline which has been drawn, may be sufficient to indicate the general characteristics of the miracles of the Gospels, to shew the clear boundaries within which they are confined, and the marvellous completeness of their

bearings. It may be sufficient to suggest the idea of a divine order by which they are united, and of a divine revelation which they contain. It may be sufficient to remove that vague feeling of the indefiniteness of their extent and the uncertainty of their nature which generally attends the desultory or disconnected study of their teaching.

And yet further than this. It may lead us to look on from the facts to the records. The perception of the unity of the miracles, as contained not only in one narrative, but in four, may convey to some a sense of that inmost bond between the Gospels, a bond which reaches deeper than all human plan, by which they are formed into one full image of the Saviour's Life;—a sense of their essential oneness which lies beneath their outward differences;—a sense of the absolute inspiration which quickens their human forms. It may convey to some a living trust in the Bible, which comes day by day with surer strength, not to one or other, but to all who study it with true faith;—with faith in the testimony of history, which tells of the origin and

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growth of its constituent parts;—with faith in the laws of criticism, which fix the subtle niceties of its language;—with faith in the Holy Spirit, Who speaks to us not only in a past record or in an unchanging nature, but with a present personal voice, revealing as in old times *the deep things of God.*

No statement, I fancy, can be less true, or find less response in the human heart, than that which speaks of the religious aspect of the world and man as rude and transitional. It is true that as our knowledge grows we conceive of the workings of God in different ways. On such a subject, all language, all thought, is necessarily inadequate and figurative; yet to the last we are forced to think, and we rest only in thinking, of the work of a personal God. In this respect the miracles are, not to one age only but to all, a Gospel, an Epiphany. They satisfy instincts which we feel: they answer to capabilities of which we are conscious. They lie at the foundation of all religion, of all life. They look not to the material only but to the spiritual. They look not to the past but to the future. They are

rather the dawning of a new day, than the lingering rays of a glory which has passed from earth. In each direction to which we turn they open heavenly visions which shed a lustre on every subject of work and thought brighter than all hope. They open visions not of an old Eden only, but of a new world, of a new creation, in which the people of God shall dwell in His presence and reflect the brightness of His Person. They open visions of a body not restored only, but transfigured, that it may share in those unimaginable joys which pass all human knowledge. They open visions of evil not only conquered, but banished, when at last all things shall be put under the feet of Christ, and death itself shall finally be subdued to Him.

And as our thoughts still stretch forward, in the light of the miracles—those traits of a divine life, pledges of an inworking power, foreshadows of the kingdom of God—the future appears not as the dull monotony of an ancient Elysium, but as a scene of endless and glorious progress. Even on earth, age

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to age bears tidings of a wider redemption in miracles on nature, on men, on spirits. The extent of the divine working grows with the growth of time, and that which is begun here shall find, as we believe, its consummation hereafter. The thought of such a consummation towards which we can all strive, is at least sufficient to ennoble life, to convert labour into sacrifice, and to consecrate sorrow. By facts and not by words we are taught that there is a power in man, though not man's, able to do all things: that there is a future open to man in which he will reign through Christ over a redeemed world. The power is ours: the future may be ours. And surely if the contest on which it hangs be hard, the prize is noble and the hope is great[1]. It may be that Christ will reveal Himself to us in losses, as He did to the Gadarenes; it may be that He will reveal Himself to us in blessings, as He did to St Peter. However it be, He can transform the loss into a greater

[1] Plato, *Phæd.* p. 114. ἀλλὰ τούτων δὴ ἕνεκα χρὴ ὧν διεληλύθαμεν, ὦ Σιμμία, πᾶν ποιεῖν, ὥστε ἀρετῆς καὶ φρονήσεως ἐν τῷ βίῳ μετασχεῖν· καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἆθλον καὶ ἡ ἐλπὶς μεγάλη.

gain, and convert the blessing into the type of a higher work. The miracles are the sacraments of these heavenly realities; and may God grant to us to carry the lessons of the miracles, the lessons of creation and providence, the lessons of mercy and judgment, the lessons of a soul all prevailing by union with its Saviour, to our common duties. May He grant to us to use the power which He gives to His service, and to enjoy the future which He offers to His praise. May He grant to us that as we faithfully follow in thought and deed Christ's past Epiphanies of power, of mercy, of judgment, we may at last share in the unspeakable triumph of His future Epiphany of glory.

The fourth Sunday after Epiphany, 1859.

SERMON IV.

THE CONVERSION OF ST PAUL.

ACTS IX. 3, 4, 6.

And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? . . . And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

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THE festival which we celebrate to-day is distinguished from the other Saints' days in the calendar, by the character of the event which it commemorates, and by the greatness of the blessing which is connected with it. It commemorates a Conversion and not a Martyrdom; and the Conversion of St Paul is taken in the Collect as the true birthday of the Gentile Church, the visible source of our own faith. The position which the festival occupies in the Christian year contributes yet further

to mark its representative nature. The Conversion of St Paul is the Saint's-day of the Epiphany, and its obvious connexion with the teaching of the season forbids us to suppose that the arrangement was undesigned. The manifestation of the glorified Saviour to His persecutor with great majesty, is the true complement of the visit of the Magi to the 'child-born king of the Jews[1]' in the village inn. The treasures of gold and frankincense and myrrh presented in humble adoration, are replaced and outweighed by the costlier offering of a life devoted in absolute service. The contrast is as encouraging as it is natural. The progressive lessons of the Epiphanies answer to the growth of the Christian life. As Christ manifests Himself to men, worship is raised to devotion and gifts end in sacrifice.

In this sense the Conversion of St Paul is the most glorious Epiphany. The miracle which it displays—the common miracle of life—is the last, and, though disregarded from

[1] The full amount of faith implied in the words ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων is, I think, commonly lost.

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its frequency, not the least marvellous of the divine works. For once the veil which hides the daily intercourse of God and man is raised: for once Christ not risen only, but ascended up on high, manifests Himself, speaking from heaven, and arrayed in light unapproachable. In the course of His earthly work He gave signs of His sovereign power and pledges of His perfect redemption on nature man and spirits, but here He reveals Himself to the individual soul. He works as we may feel His working: He speaks as we may hear His voice. The outward phenomena give distinctness to the miracle; but they are not the whole of it, nor even of the essence of it. So far as they were observable by all, they were not, as far as we can learn, marked by any clear impress of divine origin. There was indeed a light and sound; but the light revealed no present Lord, the sound conveyed no intelligible message, except to him to whom they were sent, because he alone was ready to receive them. That is rather the true miracle that Christ *does* display His glory and declare His

purpose now as at all time: that it is no mere metaphor when we speak of His voice within us: that though He is removed from earth, He yet sees the hearts of men and makes Himself known to them. How this *can* be, passes all knowledge: it is enough for us that it *is*. The fact itself is final. The constitution of man is so framed as to admit and to require the inworking of higher power, not by a mechanical movement, but by a spiritual communion. Such intercourse of spirit with spirit, of the finite with the infinite, of the creature with the Creator, faintly shadowed in the influence of sympathy and the power of will, lies at the very foundation of life; and in the Conversion of St Paul the great mystery is set before us in the fulness of its glory. The champion of the old faith is placed face to face with the Messiah whose 'way[1]' he sought to destroy. The operations of nature subserve to the counsel of God. The experience of years is compressed into an instant. The conversion of a world

[1] Ἡ ὁδός. Acts ix. 2; xxii. 4. Cf. xix. 9, 23; xxiv. 22; John xiv. 6.

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is assured in the obedience of one; and the fact which is itself its beginning, is also the type of its accomplishment. The power of other miracles may perhaps be withdrawn from the Church or left in abeyance, but the miracle of individual revelation is essential to its very being. Without it prayer degenerates into a form, and the very spring of faith is closed.

This miracle of Divine Communion is indeed one which is ever being fulfilled around us. In its fullest import, the Conversion of St Paul is the type of an intercourse between God and man, which is not confined to the great crises of life, but penetrates its whole course. Yet even in its more special form, in the startling characteristics by which it is marked, it presents in the distinct outline of outward facts the details of much which passes within us. It is true that what is for most of us a long growth was in St Paul's case externally the work of a moment; yet even so our lives are chequered by times of forgetfulness and times of awakening. After an interval of calm, the even course of life is

interrupted by some message from heaven: we cannot tell from whence it comes, for it is as the wind which bloweth where it listeth; but the influence is revealed in its effects, no less than the wind in the waving forest. For is there one of us who has not at some moment felt a clear consciousness of the purity and holiness and glory of God 'flash' upon him? who has not been 'cast down,' like St Paul, when he has found himself, as it were, face to face with his Master? who has not seemed dazzled and blinded by the awful contemplation of God's presence, as by a 'light above the brightness of the sun.' We start up, it may be, from some routine service with an unutterable sense of the eternal significance of life and death and judgment; or the busy crowded scene around us fades suddenly away from our eyes, for an instant, and in the very midst of our business or our pleasure we know that we are alone, or the impression comes to us at some season of sickness, or of distress, or of bereavement Yet however the vision comes—whether it be cherished or effaced, whether we take it as

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a sign, or try to forget it as a fancy—it is in truth a revelation, a miracle. God has manifested His glory to us as to St Paul of old. We too have witnessed an Epiphany of the Lord.

Nor is this all: the parallel holds yet further, for we may hear the very words of expostulation which followed, each in the depths of our own hearts. There is a persecution of Christ in the intercourse of life in act and thought and feeling into which we also may be carried. There are times, I fancy, when we have seen the friend who followed us with too loving a devotion led astray through our carelessness or indifference—when we have maintained, in the proud superiority of knowledge, a principle which we have not heartily believed,—when we have smiled at the simplicity or rudeness which offended our taste,—at which we have heard something, some *One* whispering to us, Why persecutest thou Me? The voice indeed is not always noticed, for it may be overpowered by the storm of passion or the strife of reasoning. It may be no more distinct in its utterance

to us than it was of old to the companions of St Paul. But if it be often unheeded or uninterpreted, there are moments when the soul is arrested by an awful silence[1] which may be felt; and then it is that the still words are heard, which even in the tones of reproof may hide a commission of great mercy.

For that voice and that silence are spiritual miracles, the promise and the beginning of greater blessings. If after long efforts of misdirected zeal, we stand at last ready to listen when God speaks, if we are prepared to look when God reveals Himself, if the articulate message is not lost for us in the mere rolling of thunder, and the personal vision in the lightning flash, then tidings of a heavenly charge will follow able to transfigure our whole life.

St Paul saw the Lord, and when next he looked up it was to confess himself a Chris-

[1] Tauler, *Serm.* I. *De Nativ.* p. 42, ed. 1697. 'Eligat ergo quisque unum e duobus. Aut taceat ipse et Verbum Nativitatis hujus in ipso dici poterit et audiri: aut loquatur ipse, et Deum tacere oportebit. Huic namque Verbo nulla re melius servitur quam tacendo, præstolando, ac auscultando.'

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tian[1]. With the other Apostles the transition from earth to heaven was the final climax of their lives; but with St Paul this was already realized in his conversion. That which was gradual and progressive in their case was abrupt and momentary with him. They were prepared by the teaching and works of 'the Son of Man' to become witnesses of His Resurrection, but he was at once confronted with the blinding majesty of 'the Son of God.' They clung to old forms with a tender affection which rendered the last homage to a transitory dispensation; but he passed at once from the extreme[2] bondage of Judaism to the fulness of Christian liberty. The death of the other saints, whether in persecution or in quiet, was, in the language of old writers, their 'birthday;' but the 'birthday' of St Paul was the time when 'he died that Christ might henceforth live in him for ever[3].' For

[1] Acts ix. 8, 18. Tauler, *Serm.* I. *in Dom.* I *Epiph.* p. 95. 'Vocatur hæc et est quidem ineloquibilis caligo, et tamen ipsa est vera et essentialis lux divinitatis.....In hac ergo caligine spiritus supra se ipsum et supra omnem captum cognitionemque suam transfertur et rapitur.'

[2] Gal. i. 14, *περισσοτέρως ζηλωτὴς ὑπάρχων.*

[3] Gal. ii. 20. This great truth lies at the foundation of very

if we regard the the testimony of his language and the tenor of his after-course, his conversion was a true death, a real martyrdom, the pattern of that to which we are called, the participation in the Passion of Christ, the death of earthly will, the martyrdom of action[1]. He died to his former feeling: he died to his former wisdom: he died to his former religion. From the moment of the change His life was one long witness to the Saviour in sufferings and labours above measure. The lessons of the Saints' days of the Christmas week are thus completed in this next lesson of Epiphany. The martyrdoms of death in will and deed[2] are fulfilled in the nobler martyrdom of life. And this fact marks the second great lesson of the day. The Conversion of St Paul

much of St Paul's language. He contemplates the Christian as perfected *ideally*, and yet *practically* striving to realize this perfection. Each Christian in virtue of his ideal union with Christ (cf. Rom. vi. 2-8; Gal. iii. 27) is *dead:* but in life we are all still charged to *do to death* that within us which opposes Christ. Cf. Col. iii. 3, 5, ἀπεθάνετε γὰρ καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ Θεῷ.... νεκρώσατε οὖν....Cf. Rom. xii. 1, 2 (παραστῆσαι, μεταμορφοῦσθε).

[1] The metaphorical sense of 'dying' (ἀποθνήσκω), which follows from this view of the relation of the Christian to Christ, seems to be peculiar to St Paul. Cf. Rom. vi. 8; Col. ii. 20; iii. 3.

[2] Wheatley, Sect. 4. § 2.

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is not only the common miracle, but also the common martyrdom of humanity. For once the living is presented to us in the majesty of a higher being. An apostle is clothed on earth with the emblems of the martyr's triumph. An ideal death is the passage to nobler action. As Death itself to the Christian is the prelude to the Resurrection, so his spiritual death was to St Paul. He died to his former zeal. He died, and as the persecutor was changed into the Apostle, his zeal was transfigured to the image of Christian love. The same spirit which bore him to Damascus to vindicate even there the purity of his national faith, carried him to countries where Christ was not named, that all men might hear the tidings of the new Gospel[1]. The same spirit which held him as a willing witness to the death of Stephen, made him ready to be devoted for his countrymen if by that means they might be saved[2].

He died to his former wisdom. He died, and found all that he had gained in the

[1] Acts ix. 2; Rom. xv. 20.
[2] Acts viii. 1; Rom. ix. 3.

schools of Tarsus or Jerusalem consecrated to Christ. The processes of philosophy and the interpretations of the Rabbis gained a new significance as they became vehicles of eternal truth. Nothing was lost in the transference, but all was changed. Formulas were at length quickened with life, and vague instincts were fulfilled in felt realities. SERM. IV.

He died to his former religion. He died, and as he looked upon the new world open before him, he found the heavenly antitypes of the ancient ritual, the eternal foundations of the ancient law. Because he had felt deeply one limited form of truth, he felt '*the* truth' more deeply. Because he had been a Pharisee 'of the straitest sect' he vindicated the completeness of Christian liberty. Because he had lived blameless by a legal standard[1], he affirmed with the noblest earnestness the sovereign prerogatives of faith.

He 'died, and behold he lived;' yet 'not he, but Christ lived in him.' He gave all to Christ; and even in this life received back a

[1] Phil. iii. 6.

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hundredfold[1], a zeal more tender as well as more burning, a wisdom past expression save in the words of the Holy Spirit[2], a religion which already anticipated the fulness of fellowship with Christ. The beginning of his mission answered to its future character. With a power beyond that of the old prophets he proclaimed the truth of God; for he had not only received the Word of God, but had seen Him who is the Word in the fulness of His perfected Manhood.

In virtue of this great change St Paul became a type of God's mercy as well as an image of those who should believe in after-time[3]; and yet more so in the mode by which it was wrought in him. The conversion which was thus glorious and complete was outwardly at least sudden and unprepared. Not in the exhaustion of sickness, not in the silence of night, not in the ecstacy of prayer, but on the highway, about noon, in the midst of his attendants as he journeyed on a mission of per-

[1] Tauler, *In Comm. D. Pauli*, p. 569. 'Qui in Christum transfundit omnes humanæ naturæ suæ vires, in hunc Ille divinæ naturæ suæ vires refundit.'

[2] 1 Cor. ii. 13.

[3] 1 Tim. i. 16.

secution, the heavenly light shone round him, the heavenly voice sounded in his ears[1]. It may be that at the name of Jesus—Jesus of Nazareth[2]—he recalled the angel's face and dying prayer of Stephen: it may be that in the image of persecution he saw again scenes of patient suffering and constant hope witnessed among the men and women whom he had haled to prison and to judgment. Yet it was not the past only which was brought back to him. For a moment he was conscious of the eternal[3], and the vision of his future life was present to his soul. Like Jacob at Bethel he recognized at once the Lord whom before he knew not. His faith was obedient, patient and instant. He was ready to enter into the

[1] Compare the Note at the end on *The narratives of the Conversion of St Paul.*

[2] Acts xxii. 8; xxvi. 9.

[3] The distinction between partial human knowledge—partial because temporal, and the absolute Divine knowledge, is constantly enforced by Augustine with a clearness which anticipates many of the difficulties of modern controversy. Cf. Ep. cxxxviii. § 7 ...'id quod in tempore novum est, non novum apud eum qui condidit tempora et sine tempore habet omnia quæ suis quibusque temporibus pro eorum varietate distribuit.' *Id.* § 8, ...'sine tempore simul sunt quæ in temporibus simul fieri non possunt quia tempora non simul currunt.' *De Trin.* ii. 10, 'Ordo quippe temporum in æterna Dei sapientia sine tempore est.' Cf. *Tract. in Joann.* xcix. 5.

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new covenant and to submit to its laws[1]. He was ready to bear the name of Christ before Jew and Gentile, and to suffer great things for His sake[2]. He hastened to preach Him straightway in the synagogues that He is the Son of God[3], when first a three days' silence had ushered in his spiritual resurrection[4].

In all these respects, in its glory, its completeness, its suddenness, the Conversion of St Paul—the martyrdom of life—is charged with lessons for us. The fact is of lasting significance not only as the pledge of an abiding miracle, but as the pattern of an acceptable sacrifice. It is true that no one of us can stand outwardly in the same relation to Christ as St Paul stood; and yet essentially we may. All experience shows us that in these later times, when Christ is commonly revealed in the natural development of life, an instant is often the crisis of spiritual life. 'Man is not the creature of habit only, but of impulse;' or rather there are silent habits, habits of heart and soul, which lie unnoticed

[1] Acts ix. 18.
[2] Acts ix. 15, 16.
[3] Acts ix. 20.
[4] Acts ix. 9.

till some spark kindles them. And if there are some whose first steps are turned heavenward, and whose baptismal cross ever reflects the light of the heavenly dawn, others loiter on their way, and turn aside or turn backwards. Yet for these, voices and lights from heaven are not wanting. The voice which chides a sinful past, points also to a noble future: the light which blinds the outward sense, reveals heaven to the soul.

How it is that a man can be thus converted when his 'character is formed' is beyond all explanation. It is like the former difficulty of man holding converse with God, though it is less mysterious than that. We know little of our own hearts and nothing of the hearts of others; yet we are conscious, each within ourselves, of conflicting currents of thought and feeling along which we may be borne in turn, of powers and capabilities which may at some time be evoked. The single act which *reveals* the hero does not *make* the hero. Long years of silence prepared him for the momentary crisis; and so perhaps the instant

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of a sudden conversion may be only the revelation of an unmarked past.

Whether however it be sudden or gradual, we *know* that we are capable of a spiritual transfiguration which is complete and permanent. The image of that change is presented to us in the service of to-day. It is at once a death and a birth, a personal act and a divine energy, a martyrdom and a miracle. The burden of added sins may make the martyrdom more terrible, the sacrifice greater, but still, by God's mercy, it is possible. The long preparation of habit may make the miracle less startling, the nearness of Christ less felt, but yet it is real. To the triumph of this life-long martyrdom, to the power of this life-long miracle we are all called. The life of St Paul may be the pattern of our own; and we have gifts to bring to God like those which he brought. There is knowledge which can be devoted to Him with the patient faithfulness of absolute truth. There is zeal which can be hallowed for Him through the purifying power of widest sympathy. There is faith which can

be quickened by Him in the present influence of closest fellowship.

All hope lies before us and within us. Life is first a sacrifice and then it is a miracle. Day by day as we offer all to Christ more faithfully we shall see the glories which linger still around it. The 'open secret' of the world will then be the rule of our course: the miracle of prayer and communion: the miracle of spiritual life. Not *for* ourselves, but with a largeness of aim which transcends all earthly limits—not *by* ourselves, but with a fulness of strength which exceeds all human need, we shall labour on. The very sorrows of the past will be forgotten or changed into blessings. God will give back to us the years which have been wasted in idleness or consumed in folly. Regret will be changed into devotion, and the awakening of fear into the life of love. Old things will pass away, and all things will become new.

NOTE.

THE NARRATIVES OF THE CONVERSION OF ST PAUL.

THE three narratives of the Conversion of St Paul which are contained in the Acts present an interesting problem—and far more than this—in regard to the principles of Scripture interpretation. The same writer has preserved three distinct accounts of the fact, which present remarkable variations; and the Apostle himself, who was the subject of the miracle, is represented as relating the same event with different details on two occasions. Any attempt to estimate the real character of the variations must rest upon a close comparison of the several narratives. These I have given below, in a form convenient for examination, marking generally the extent of their verbal coincidence by italics, and preserving the text of the English Version, with the exception of some manifest corruptions, of which one stands almost alone in the history of the Greek text.

Acts ix. 1—9. (St Luke's narrative.)	Acts xxii. 5—11. (St Paul's narrative to the people.)	Acts xxvi. 12—18. (St Paul's narrative before Agrippa.)
1 And Saul...went unto the *high priest*,	5 From [the *high priest* and council] I received *letters*	12 ...as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the *chief priests*,
2 And desired of him *letters* to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any *of this way, whether they were men or women*, he might *bring them bound unto Jerusalem*.	unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, (Cf. v. 4.) to *bring them* which were there *bound unto Jerusalem*, for to be punished.	
3 *And as* he *journeyed* he *came near Damascus;*	6 *And* it came to pass, that *as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus*, about noon,	13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way *a light* from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.
and *suddenly there shined round about* him *a light from heaven:*	*suddenly there shone from heaven a* great *light* round about me.	
4 And he *fell* to *the earth* and	7 And I *fell* unto the ground and	14 And when we were all fallen to *the earth*,
heard a voice, saying unto him,	heard a voice saying unto me,	I *heard a voice saying* unto me

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?	*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*	in the Hebrew tongue, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.
5 And he said: *Who art thou, Lord?* and he [said] *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*	8 And I answered, *Who art thou, Lord?* and he said unto me, *I am Jesus* of Nazareth *whom thou persecutest.*	15 And I said, *Who art thou, Lord?* And the Lord said, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*
6 *But*[1] *arise* and go into the city, and *it shall be told thee* what thou must *do.*	(Cf. v. 10.)	16 *But rise,* and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, *to make thee* a minister and *a witness* both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;
	(Cf. vv. 14, 15.)	17 Delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee,
(Cf. v. 15.)	(Cf. vv. 15, 21.)	18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of

[1] The addition in the common text, *It is hard.... said unto him*, appears to be supported by no Greek MS.

7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless,

hearing the voice (*ἀκούοντες τῆς φωνῆς*) but seeing no man.

(Cf. v. 6.)

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened he saw nothing;

but they *led him by the hand*, and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light,

[and were afraid];

but they heard not the voice (*τὴν φωνὴν οὐκ ἤκουσαν*) of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus, and there *it shall be told thee* of all things which are appointed for thee to *do*.

11 And when

I could not see for the glory of that light, being *led by the hand* of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

The first thing that strikes us is the general agreement with regard to the outward details of the narrative. The occasion, the commission, the place, the time, the light, the company, are given with complete agreement. Each account contains some peculiar details on these particulars, but all are perfectly harmonious. This agreement, however, is no longer preserved in the accounts of the *voice*. The words of the Lord are related by St Paul in his two speeches with very considerable differences; and a further difference occurs as to the effect of the voice upon the bystanders; but it is of importance to notice that the differences lie within these intelligible limits.

There is another record of a heavenly voice contained in the Gospels (John xii. 28), which seems to contribute in no small degree to the understanding of the scene. At the close of our Lord's ministry, in answer to the prayer, 'Father, glorify Thy name,' we are told that 'there came a voice from heaven: I both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore, that stood by and heard, said that it thundered (*βροντὴν γεγονέναι*). Others said: An angel hath spoken (*λελάληκεν*) to Him. Jesus answered and said: This voice came not for my sake, but for your sakes' (John xii. 28—30). So again on the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles spake with new (*ἑτέραις*) tongues, 'all were amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? but others (*ἕτεροι*) mocking said, These men are full of new wine' (Acts ii. 12, 13). It is then evident from these instances, as might, indeed, have been conjectured antecedently, that the heavenly voice is not certainly intelligible *mechanically*. The mere *sound* does not necessarily convey the meaning. It is a new tongue, and the spirit of man in communion with the Spirit of God interprets its message spiritually. To some the sound is like the incoherent wanderings of the drunken, to others like the message of great tidings; to some it is like the natural voice of the thunder, to others like the words of an angel, to others as the express utterance of God. This fact, which seems as true in reason as it is clearly expressed in the sacred writings, points to the solution of the first difference as to the outward effect of the voice. According to the narrative of St Luke, the men who were with St Paul 'stood speechless (*ἐνεοί, dumb, paralyzed*), listening to the voice (*ἀκούοντες τῆς φωνῆς*), but seeing no man'

(Acts ix. 7). The present participle marks the continuity of the effort, while the genitive expresses the *mechanical* side of hearing, the impression of sound, and not the apprehension of the meaning as a whole[1]. On the other hand St Paul says, 'The men who were with me saw the light; but heard not the voice of him that spake to me' (*τὴν δὲ φωνὴν οὐκ ἤκουσαν τοῦ λαλοῦντός μοι*): to them the voice was no articulate utterance of that Saviour who was speaking to, or rather talking with, St Paul. The two phrases are rather supplementary than opposed to one another; and become forcible and harmonious in proportion as the exact words of the narrative are interpreted with the strictest precision[2].

The variation as to the *substance* of the divine words seems to be another consequence of the spiritual essence of the voice. The first words of abrupt inquiry: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest Thou me?* The question of St Paul: *Who art thou, Lord?* The personal revelation: *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:* are the same in each narrative. So far the relation of personal communion is established between the persecutor and his Saviour; but in that speaking to the soul which followed, not indeed without external means, even as thought itself is impossible without words, we may well believe that St Paul found revealed the outlines of that future which experience afterwards realized. The voice which to others was a mere sound, was to him a prophecy in every sense, of which the full meaning was coextensive with his after life. This revelation could not be bound up in any one form of words, even if it was apprehended in the sacred language, and the various lessons which St Paul refers to it illustrate the nature of the change which was then potentially wrought in him. Identity of words in the record of the contents of such a manifestation of the Saviour would represent the event as mechanical and not

[1] Perhaps it was from some apprehension of the difference of the natural and spiritual voices that Chrysostom and Didymus (Cramer, *Cap.* in Act. ix.) confine the words 'heard the voice' to the hearing of the voice of St Paul.

[2] This difference of the meanings of *ἀκούω* with *gen.* and *accus.*, which lies in the fundamental ideas of the cases, is noticed by grammarians quite independently of the application which may be made of it to this passage: Winer, *Gramm.* § 30, 7. Cf. Luke xv. 25. The difference of tense in ix. 7 and xxii. 9, marks a difference in sense; though St Paul would be described as hearing both physically and spiritually.

as spiritual. While, on the other hand, the recognition of the essentially spiritual nature of the communication leaves the external characteristics of the scene in their full integrity, and brings them into harmony with the effects which the revelation of the Divine Glory elsewhere produces among men.

Narrabo omnia mirabilia tua. Narrat omnia mirabilia Dei, qui ea non solum in corporibus palam, sed in animis invisibiliter quidem sed longe sublimius et excellentius fieri videt. Nam terreni homines et occultis dediti magis mirantur resurrexisse in corpore Lazarum, quam resurrexisse in anima persecutorem Paulum. Sed quoniam visibile miraculum ad illuminationem animam vocat, invisibile autem eam quæ vocata venit illuminat, omnia narrat mirabilia Dei qui credens visibilibus ad intelligenda invisibilia transitum facit. (Aug. *ad Ps.* ix. 2).

THE END.

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